

**REMEMBERING RACIAL VIOLENCE:
MEMORY MOVEMENTS AND THE RESURGENCE OF TRAUMATIC PASTS**

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ABSTRACT

**RAJ ANDREW GHOSHAL: Remembering Racial Violence:
Memory Movements and the Resurgence of Traumatic Pasts
(Under the direction of Kenneth Andrews)**

Recent years have seen a marked resurgence of interest in America's racially violent past. But despite the growing presence of the country's racially violent past in present-day politics and culture, there has been little scholarship on the rise of efforts to address the legacies of long-buried violence. The mnemonic resurgence of historic racial violence raises a broader theoretical question: How do buried, traumatic pasts resurge to become morally and politically salient in the present? This three-paper format dissertation is the first systematic consideration of "memory movements" addressing historic racial violence. Following an introductory chapter, I describe the rise of these buried pasts and propose a set of hypotheses around memory movements more broadly. I then present analyses of the local-level emergence of memory movements around 1877-1954 racial violence. I conclude with a comparative analysis of why different projects have attained varying levels of impact. I develop a framework for understanding the rise, development, and outcomes of memory movements. My project offers insight into how the past comes to shape present-day moral debates and identities, and builds a bridge between studies of social movements, collective memory, and racial redress.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The past quarter-century has seen the rise of numerous “memory movements” seeking to call attention to horrific racial violence from America’s past. Coming to terms with America’s racially violent past has become a major political and cultural concern, as evidenced not just by the rise of the local commemorative movements at the center of this dissertation, but also by increased activity of the reparations movement, recent apologies by various actors for participation in slavery or lynching, conflicts over the modern meaning of the Confederate battle flag, re-trials of civil rights era “cold cases,” and more. Though numerous scholars have written on the global rise of a past-oriented politics that seeks to rectify past traumas, little scholarly attention has been paid thus far to these efforts to rekindle awareness of both specific instances and general patterns of violence and injustice during slavery and segregation in the United States.

This mixed-method, three-article dissertation examines the nature, origins, and outcomes of memory movements around buried racial violence. While its object is the resurgence of memory of past American racial violence, especially through local-level commemoration projects that seek to repudiate and in some ways redress this ugly past, it also addresses a larger set of movements and speaks to more general scholarly concerns. In particular, this dissertation sits at the intersection of two fields of sociology: collective memory studies and social movement studies. In the past two decades, social movement scholars have sought to better incorporate culture into movement studies. Meanwhile, the

explosion of work in collective memory during the same period has led to calls to systematize memory studies—a field characterized by numerous concepts generated by diverse case studies, but less sense of whether these concepts apply broadly or of how they interact. This dissertation takes seriously the possibility that memory scholars and movement scholars interested in addressing their fields’ respective lacuna have much to gain from each other. The major theoretical concern of this project is to examine the unfolding of challenges to collective memory from a movements perspective; I also suggest the utility of the opposite tack—that is, the illumination of movement processes through a memory studies lens—though I do not fully develop it here.

Chapter 2 of the dissertation is the most general and theoretical. The primary goal of this chapter is to establish a broad theoretical agenda for the study of memory movements. In this chapter, I first introduce the phenomenon of memory movements around past racial violence, describing the central manifestations of America’s racially troubled past in its present in some detail. I then move to theorizing memory movements more broadly, intersecting research on cultural movements, new social movements, and movement outcomes, along with that on the unfolding of collective memory, to identify salient features of memory movements. The second half of the paper proposes eight hypotheses about memory movements. These hypotheses concern movement emergence, forms and trajectories, and linkages between different movements. I draw on extant theory and research from memory studies and movement studies to ground my hypotheses, and I illustrate their utility with examples from my research as well as those from previously published studies of other, similar movements. I close by discussing

other possible hypotheses and research questions, especially concerning movement outcomes, suggested by the set of cases around past racial violence.

Chapter 3 takes the general mnemonic resurgence of past racial violence as a given, and asks why in this context local commemorative projects have emerged around some incidents of fatal, segregation-era racial violence, but not others. I use rare-events logistic regression techniques to compare all “positive” cases of local commemoration to a random sample of *non*-commemorations of apparently similar incidents. I draw on social movement and collective memory theories concerning actual incident characteristics, the conduciveness of present-day local context, organizational features of movement communities and their opponents, and diffusion dynamics. I find that incident characteristics, constructions of incidents’ significance immediately after their occurrence, community contexts, and the presence or absence of nearby commemorative projects are important influences on memory movement emergence. I argue that the findings illustrate the utility of adopting a social movement perspective on commemoration.

Since recent scholarship has suggested that movement emergence and movement outcomes may not be shaped by the same factors, it is important to evaluate outcomes among the set of projects that have emerged, as well. Chapter 4 is focused on the scope that different memory movements attain. Since all memory movements seek to publicize the incidents they mark and repudiate, considering why some movements attain significant publicity, endure over time, leave physical markers, transform school curricula, gain large audiences for their events, and so on, is worthwhile. Using qualitative and basic quantitative methods, I examine the set of all commemorative

movements that have emerged, comparing those that have attained greater and lesser scope. I focus closely here on “opportunity” perspectives from movement studies, but build on these by developing the concept of *mnemonic opportunity structure* to explain variation in movement outcomes. I argue that both past incident features and present community contexts are important dimensions of mnemonic opportunity structure, and that this concept will bear fruit in studies of other movements that seek to transform memory beyond those around past racial violence.

CHAPTER 2: MEMORY MOVEMENTS: UNDERSTANDING THEIR ORIGINS, FORMS, AND TRAJECTORIES

Abstract

In the past quarter-century, an array of efforts to respond to historic white-on-black violence in the United States has surfaced. These responses have taken various forms, including calls for slavery reparations, projects to memorialize lynching victims, re-prosecutions of civil-rights era “cold case” murders, state-issued apologies for slavery and inaction on lynching, efforts to change school curricula to incorporate more information on white terrorism after the fall of slavery, and more. This paper theorizes the concept of memory movements to pull together these efforts that prior research has considered separately, or in some cases, has barely considered. It outlines this set of efforts and documents the varied goals and strategies pursued by memory-activists around past U.S. racial violence. As resurgent attention to past racial violence in the U.S. is one set of cases in the more general memory movement phenomenon, I then use the set of cases to develop several hypotheses about the origins, development, inter-relationships, and impacts of memory movements, grounding these hypothesis in extant scholarship and suggesting their utility for further work at the intersection of collective memory and social movement studies.

Introduction

I should have dressed more comfortably for the sweltering heat of late July in Georgia, I think, as I feel a bead of sweat slowly trickle down my back. But as I notice the sputtering of an old car motor cutting through the chirping of insects around me, growing in volume as it approaches, I remember that at the moment, the heat is among the least of my concerns. I am crouched behind a tree next to a small road leading over a bridge in a rural area several miles outside downtown Monroe, Georgia. My line of vision is limited by the tree branches, but I can see a white sedan pull to a stop at the bridge. It doesn't take long to notice that the motorists haven't stopped to enjoy the setting—as the doors open, I hear screaming from inside the car, coupled with a male voice angrily barking orders. I can see that the man issuing commands—a white man with graying hair wearing work pants, a pressed white shirt, and a sun hat—is outside the car. He appears to have come out of hiding from the woods on the side of the road across from me.

“Get out of the car!” he commands, taking no heed of the wailing that I recognize as coming from two women inside the car, nor the protests of two other male voices. The man is joined by several other people; I notice now that there are two men and women being ordered out of the car and that they are African Americans, while the others who to have come out from hiding in the woods are all white. The group of eight or so whites—a group I know to be composed of Ku Klux Klan members—force the car's passengers out of the road and into a clearing on the same side of the road where I am crouched, shoving their prisoners along and pointing what appear to be guns at them. One of them places a length of rope around the neck of one passenger, a young, dark-skinned man whom they call “Roger” and appear to take special pleasure in tormenting. As the other

victims are shoved and dragged away from the road, one of the white men prods Roger in the chest, spitting “This will teach you to fight with a white man!” One of the women, whose swollen belly suggests an advanced pregnancy, recoils in horror at the prodding.

The ongoing screaming of the two black women is matched in intensity only by the increasing vehemence with which the man in charge and several of his colleagues unleash a barrage of racial slurs. The African Americans—overwhelmed by numbers and weaponry—are not fighting back; they are pleading for their lives as it becomes clear that they are to be killed. Their pleading is to no avail. The four victims are lined up in the center of the clearing, and the leader of the group of whites counts off to his men. As he reaches “three,” a series of shots ring out. The two couples fall to the ground, red spattered across their chests, but the horror isn’t over yet. One of the shooters—a dark-haired man who appears to be in his thirties—draws a knife as he bends over the body of the pregnant woman. I am unable to see what he is doing until he stands up triumphantly, holding a mangled mess that appears to be a fetus he has torn from the pregnant woman’s body. “Did I do good, boss?” “Real good, son! You did real good.” The older man replies.

Horrific events such as the one I have described here were all too common in the United States until halfway through the 20th Century. But the scene I have just described was not drawn from historical sources; rather, I saw it all in person. This event took place in 2009, more than half a century after such violence had become extremely rare. It was not an actual lynching, but rather a staged and planned re-enactment of the last mass lynching in America. The red stains came from fake blood packets; the “fetus” was a doll.

When I have described attending a lynching re-enactment to my friends and colleagues, I have uniformly encountered shock. Perhaps the description I have given—together with my sometime use of the word “commemoration,” a term that bears positive connotations in certain contexts, to describe efforts to draw attention to past racial violence—calls to mind the work of other sociologists who have gained insider access to hate groups such as the KKK (e.g. Blee 2003). But as an Asian American, I could not have hoped to pass unnoticed in a gathering of white supremacists. This re-enactment, however, was not intended to celebrate white terrorism. It was designed as a means of calling attention to the unresolved status of the crime, in hopes of energizing efforts to criminally prosecute two living white Georgians who some believe were involved in the crime. The ceremonies earlier that day leading up to this re-enactment were held in an African American church, and the crowd of 200 or so people watching the incident along with me was overwhelmingly composed of African Americans, with only a few white participants and members of the media present. And perhaps most strikingly, the group staging the event was neither a hate group nor a well-intentioned but tactless group of white Americans, but none other than Georgia’s Association of Black Elected Officials. In 1946, this incident was one instance of a terrorist tactic used by elite and non-elite whites to frighten African Americans into accepting subservient status and to punish those who would not be cowed. Six decades later, it had returned, transformed into a performance sponsored by some of the state’s most powerful African American elected leaders, in hopes of awakening buried collective memories of such brutal injustice.

If you are shocked by the idea of re-enacting a lynching—perhaps even regardless of the intentions behind it, or your assessment of the strategic value of showcasing such brutality—you are not alone. The annual re-enactments of the Moore’s Ford lynching of 1946 that have taken place the last five years have indeed divided the group that formed in the late 1990s around a shared desire to honor the victims and address the ongoing legacies of this terrorist violence. For example, one of the leaders of the post-1997 commemorative effort described the re-enactments as purchasing progress on legal redress for past injustice (here in the form of prosecution) at the expense of undermining present-day racial reconciliation. Other critics have argued that the pregnancy and disemboweling of one of the victims are historically inaccurate, grafted on from another well-documented incident three decades earlier and needlessly inflammatory. But while re-enacting racial terrorism is an extreme and highly unusual strategy, the goals of redress for past injustice and present-day racial reconciliation that the activist mentioned above spoke of—along with goals of educating the public about past atrocities and honoring the dead—underlie a far broader and more varied set of efforts around commemoration of past racial violence across the United States than simply this one case. The resurgence of buried racial violence in American collective memory over the past two and a half decades can be seen in several dozen projects marking specific incidents like this one, in efforts to pursue civil-rights era “cold cases” through the legal system, in increased activity by the reparations movement, and in the growth of heritage tourism and museum exhibits addressing buried violence, among other places.

This paper addresses the rise of past racial violence against African Americans as a major concern in American culture and politics. While some scholarship has

documented individual forms of this resurgence (e.g. Romano 2006, Cunningham 2008), this paper brings together the broader set under the conceptual framework of memory movements. The second section outlines the concept of memory movements. I argue that this concept provides a useful way to organize research findings and hypotheses concerning the rise of buried pasts and the links between social movement studies and collective memory. In the third section, I document the contemporary rise in attention to traumatic pasts broadly, and then identify several discrete dimensions of this surge in attention to traumatic pasts for the case of past white-on-black terrorism in the US. I identify several goals and strategies of efforts to challenge collective forgetting (Schwartz 2009) of past racial violence. Part four of the paper draws on the case of resurgent consciousness of past racial violence, along with prior theory and research, to develop a variety of hypotheses with broader applicability to the politics of the past in the present. I use comparison cases to buttress my conclusions where appropriate. The primary goals of the paper are to describe the important but understudied present-day turn to remembering past racial violence, develop a framework linking memory and movement studies through which this turn can be understood, and suggest the broader relevance of this approach beyond the cases at hand.¹

¹ Outside of prior research and theory, additional evidence I draw on for this paper comes from a mixed qualitative-quantitative data set I gathered over the course of three years, described fully in Chapter 3. I draw on 73 semi-structured telephone and in-person interviews with individuals involved in projects commemorating specific local acts of violence, along with 17 interviews conducted with individuals involved in other manifestations of memory movements around past racial violence (including broader reconciliation projects, re-prosecution efforts, and so on). I also rely occasionally on quantitative data I collected about more than two dozen local commemorative projects and the incidents around which they formed, using Census records, historic and current newspaper databases, internet searches, databases on organizational activity, and more. A third data source is my in-person observation of various commemorative and reconciliation activities from 2007 to 2010. This includes travel to and participation in major conferences on racial reconciliation at the University of Mississippi (2007) and Tulsa's John Hope Franklin Center (2010), trips to Springfield, Illinois' three-day 1908 Race Riot Commemoration and Lincoln Bicentennial celebration (2008 and 2009), attendance at a Moore's Ford lynching re-enactment (2009) and a meeting of that incident's Memorial Committee (2010), participation in a meeting of

Memory Movements

“Memory movements” are sustained collective efforts to bring increased attention to, seek redress for, and/or commemorate incidents or individuals from the past, or to transform the prevailing way that such incidents are understood. Efforts to suppress or erase memories, or to reduce their salience, can also be considered memory movements, subject to caveats discussed below. Memory movements are collective challenges to authority (Snow 2004)—with authority defined here not necessarily as a particular set of actors, state, regime, or the like, but rather as dominant understandings of the past that may or may not be those promoted by the state. That is, memory movements seek to upend general inattention or attention to some aspect of the past, or to transform how some aspect of the past is understood.

Outside of racial violence, other memory movements of note include endeavors like efforts to conceptualize and commemorate the Holocaust (Novick 2000), Holocaust revisionism, the post-1950s Native American ethnic pride movement (Nagel 1997), and contestation over the meaning of Columbus Day (Kubal 2008). The fact that Rosa Parks is a household name, while perhaps only a tiny sliver of Americans have heard of

individuals considering marking a lynching on the outskirts of Atlanta (2010), participation in one of Atlanta’s monthly race riot walking tours (2008), two trips to Wilmington, North Carolina to visit the Wilmington 1898 Foundation’s archives and observe commemorative activities (2007 and 2009), observation of the unveiling of a lynching marker in Valdosta, Georgia (2010), attendance at a meeting in Atlanta of family members of “cold case” murder victims seeking re-prosecutions (2010), and two visits to a cultural center and a grave marker in Florida erected to honor two different prominent lynching victims (2008 and 2010). Besides conducting formal interviews with commemorators/participants and collecting information on the events and activities themselves in these cases, I also conducted 32 very short interviews with viewers of Springfield’s Race Riot museum exhibit and obtained copies of newspaper comment slips left by audience members over several months. Finally, I read hundreds of newspaper articles on these memory movement projects, along with several major reports (such as relevant sections of the Rosewood and Tulsa commission reports) and dozens of books on both the incidents and the recent responses they have spawned. Overall, the multiple data sources are very useful in that they simultaneously provide both depth and breadth of knowledge concerning the topic.

Claudette Colvin (who was arrested for violating Montgomery's segregated transportation regime shortly before Parks, but was rejected as a mobilizing symbol when activists learned she was pregnant and unmarried; Schwartz 2009) is similarly the product of memory mobilization by certain civil rights activists and groups. Whether a memory is historically accurate may be irrelevant to whether a memory movement promoting it can arise and flourish.

Memory movements bear more than a passing resemblance to the "new social movements" described by theorists such as Melucci (1996), Touraine (1981), and Habermas (1985). Memory movements do seek instrumental goals (sometimes), but having people know of their existence, and mobilizing people on their behalf, implies that they have attained some "success" since they have already won over adherents and made others aware of previously submerged understandings of the past. Of course, memory movements often seek to go beyond these "existential" goals by winning new adherents and attaining policy goals (such as transformed curricula or the building of monuments), just as some new social movements often sought not merely to exist but to propagate themselves and transform society more broadly (e.g. Zablocki 1980). Critiques by scholars such as Pichardo (1997) and Young (2003) holding that there is not that much "new" about new social movements should also be taken seriously for memory movements, as political actors have likely always contested the meaning of the past. But the Twentieth Century "memory boom" (Winter 2000) combined with a global turn to repairing broken pasts (Torpey 2003, Spinner-Halev 2007) suggests that memory movements have taken on new importance and prominence in the current era. There are

few better cases to illustrate this point than the current resurgence of buried racial violence in American collective memory.²

Beyond demarcating a class of movements, the memory movements concept is useful in three additional ways: (1) bringing greater theoretical formalization to the study of collective memory through the use of movements concepts, (2) deepening movement studies' understanding of culture, especially as concerns collective identity and framing, through the use of memory concepts, and (3) exploring the complex relations between state and civil actors in contestation over memory. While this paper primarily illustrates the first benefit, I explain each below.

Formalizing memory studies through movements concepts

First, the memory movement concept is intended to make explicit the ties between movements and memory studies, in order to argue for the potential utility of concepts from the social movement studies literature in understanding collective memory. Though memory studies has flourished in the past several decades, with perhaps more scholarship on collective memory produced in the past two decades than in the prior century, Olick

² My foray into defining memory movements is intended as generative rather than exhaustive, and as movement scholars and participants know well, whether a project definitively constitutes a movement can be difficult to assess—for example, it is not clear whether a small handful of people can constitute a social movement, or whether shared belief structures challenging authority than produce little action constitute a movement. Seemingly trivial memory movements are possible, just as seemingly trivial social movements are possible more generally. This is not a flaw in the concept, but rather a reason scholars should consider what kinds of movements they find most worthy of study. The most relevant boundary concerns in the realm of memory movements are whether single individuals, or small numbers of individuals, can constitute a memory movement, and as whether mnemonic entrepreneurs who confine their work to rarified forums (such as academic conferences) can be considered movements. In this paper, I do not consider commemorative activities undertaken by a single individual without publicity, projects like movies driven by individual agents of memory, or books written by individual authors, as true memory movements, because they lack the collective element that has been so central to theories of movements. Of course, efforts by single individuals may *generate* movements—a single article by a newspaper reporter was pivotal in unleashing the most successful race riot memory movement in American history, Rosewood's commemoration and redress effort, and academic conferences may trigger popular attention and commemoration.

(1995: 748-9) maintained that “if there were ever a field overrun by unconnected case studies and in desperate need of theory and synthesis, it is social studies of memory.” While this apparent absence of confirmed generalizable findings in memory studies may simply be a result of the high levels of contingency and complexity at play in collective memory, it may be that efforts to increase the systematization of memory studies can benefit from movement scholars’ extant efforts to systematize their own seemingly equally complex and contingent field of study. Since memory movement activists frame the past in particular ways, mobilize resources to agitate for their preferred interpretations, and benefit or are hindered by broader cultural contexts and opportunities, movement studies concepts like framing, resource mobilization, and opportunity structures, along with repression, spillover, counter-movements, and the like, might profitably be tested in the realm of memory studies (see Kubal 2008 for an initial foray in this direction).

Deepening Movement Studies’ Conceptions of Culture

The movements/memory studies dialogue promoted by the memory movements concept also enables memory studies to flesh out important but still under-theorized cultural dimensions of movements. Two movement studies concepts—collective identity and framing—may particularly benefit from greater contact with memory studies. Memory studies can more fully ground the concepts of collective identity and framing than extant movement scholarship alone. Scholars of social movements have long argued that collective identity is crucial in social movement mobilization, but as Jasper (2004:3) points out, surprisingly little scholarship has documented movement actors fomenting

change in collective identity. Memory studies helps fill this gap. Halbwachs (1992 [1925]) argued that remembered pasts moved inevitably over time from the status of *collective memory*—living, imbued with moral meaning and emotion—to that of *history*—known, but unattached to significant emotion, and not foundational to collective identities. Recently Cragg (2008) has criticized this perspective, arguing that political actors’ mnemonic campaigns can call memories back to vivid life from the dustbin of history. This argument about how collective memory changes finds a parallel in Isaac’s (2008) call for movement scholars to pay attention to the ways that movements “move”—the cultural and political shifts they may induce, but also their own unstable ontological status as attitude structures, cultural trends, and networks of organizations. In arguing for greater focus on how movements transform collective identity, Jansen (2007: 961-2) wrote that “only rarely do representational struggles result in significant shifts in the dominant values assigned to symbols. This means that ... it is useful to focus on the distinct moments of change—on the symbolic shifts or ‘turning points’—that punctuate more stable periods of symbolic continuity.” While memory movements’ importance is especially obvious at these turning points, representational struggles are ongoing efforts to induce movement that only sometimes produce that movement. Since collective memory is at the heart of collective identity, and because memory scholarship is centrally concerned with *change* in memory and identity (often taking change in collective memory as its dependent variable), attention to memory movement projects may be helpful in explaining under-explored identity-changing processes at the heart of mobilization.

Similarly, memory studies can contribute to movement studies' conception of framing. While cultural challenges to movement studies in the past two decades have destabilized many structural movement studies concepts, some movement scholarship continues to present framing as highly strategic and cognitive, as if frames were movement-external resources that activists choose freely based on cold calculation of costs and benefits (e.g. Chong 1991). But frames are not conjured up strategically in every case; rather, activists' identities and beliefs condition their choices, and some struggles are more intrinsically connected to one particular frame than another. Memory studies' more thorough understanding of how identity shapes goals and strategies means that it offers a less mechanical and more empirically grounded model of framing than movement scholarship alone. In the past several decades, memory studies has turned against pure instrumental presentism (Schudson 1989), producing a range of work demonstrating the ability of memory to "possess" actors—not simply working "against" their interests, but rather constituting their interests. Choices in memory movements about framing and strategy are often not calculating; rather, activists see themselves as "compelled" by horrific or grotesque pasts (Halfmann and Young 2010) to pursue particular strategies. Memory studies' work on the link between identity and action is therefore well positioned to engage recent efforts in movement studies (e.g. Polletta 2002) to draw together strategy and emotion in developing a richer understanding of framing.

States and Civil Actors: Contestation over Memory

A final benefit of the memory movement concept is that it makes explicit the fact that non-state actors may engage in politically oriented memory work (Jansen 2007) in contestation with formal authorities or entrenched understandings of the past. As Armstrong and Cragg (2006) suggest, the vast majority of research on commemoration has concerned state-developed projects (such as war memorials and national holidays), in which commemorators can simply be assumed to have adequate resources and motivation to embark on memory projects. Often, however, civil actors do memory work. This work may be in opposition to state authorities, and issues of motivations, capability, and interactions with state authorities are critical. The dynamics of movement-state interactions have been at the heart of movement studies for decades (e.g. McAdam et al. 2001), and that field has developed numerous useful conceptual tools through which interactions between memory movements and states can be explored.³

State actors can participate in memory movements, but memory movements are not identical to memory projects; memory movements are a subset of memory projects. Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 133) defines memory projects as “projects designed to give presence to the previously absent or silenced past.” However, memory projects might also include enterprises such as those discussed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) in which states shape collective memory with the intention of reinforcing their own power

³ Memory movements may at least in some cases be best understood like those movements that Binder (2002) termed cultural movements. Binder’s study of efforts by Afrocentrists to redesign public school curricula found that some school board members, principals, and teachers—actors who movement studies would typically cast as “insiders” or “elites”—sometimes intervened to *help* the challenging movements, occasionally even themselves becoming activists for curriculum changes. Binder suggested a more general interrogation of the validity of movement studies’ tradition outsider/elite dichotomy. While whether states facilitate memory movements is an empirical question, I define the term to make participation by state actors at least a theoretical possibility. That is, memory movements are defined not by their opposition to the state or other institutional authorities, but rather by their opposition to dominant collective memory (or the lack thereof).

or legitimacy. For example, the constant striving of Big Brother's Ministry of Truth in George Orwell's novel *1984* to rewrite history, as well as parallel real-world efforts by some Twentieth-Century dictatorships, constitute memory projects. Because this sort of project is both initiated by and intended to enshrine interpretations favorable to state insiders, I do not consider projects like this to be memory *movements*.

The resurgence of buried pasts

The past is now everywhere. For individuals, the rise of written records, electronic storage media, photography, and related technologies over the past century has made the past more easily accessible than ever before, and individuals in wealthy societies show widespread interest in genealogy and family history. What is true of individuals appears even more true for states in the past several decades, particularly with regard to traumatic pasts. Numerous scholars have commented on the rise over the past several decades in attention to past injustice or trauma by states, ethnic groups, and international organizations. For example, Howard-Hassmann and Gibney (2008) argue that we have entered a global "age of apology" in which states seek to enhance their credibility through taking responsibility for past atrocities. The rise of transitional justice efforts globally includes Truth and Reconciliation Commissions such as South Africa's well-known effort to address the legacies of decades of Apartheid rule (Gibson 2004) and several dozen lesser-known truth commissions (Minow 1999). Collective, and frequently state-sponsored, efforts to mark past traumas are now commonplace in many parts of the world.

If traumatic pasts have resurfaced as an issue in present day culture and politics worldwide, they have done so with particular intensity and variety for African Americans in the United States. The most obvious examples of America's racially traumatic past resurfacing are growing attention to calls for slavery reparations (e.g. Robinson 2000), apologies by various state legislatures and the U.S. Senate for slavery and for not passing anti-lynching legislation, and a recent push by the FBI to renew investigations of civil-rights-era murders (Cunningham 2008). Efforts to remove the Confederate battle flag from Southern state capitol buildings and state flags (e.g. Reingold and Wilke 1998; Webster and Leib 2001) have also served as modern-day flashpoints for conflict surrounding America's collective memory of its racially violent past, and several dozen local commemorative projects have arisen around marking and repudiating past racial violence.

Actors involved in these movements around memory have varied in whether the actors they repudiate are *specific or general*, and in whether repudiating the past takes primarily *material or symbolic* forms. Crossing these two categories generates a two-by-two descriptive ideal-typical scheme of ways memory movements attempt to reckon with ugly pasts: these efforts may symbolically repudiate particular targets, or do so materially, and they may symbolically or materially repudiate broader collectives. The goals or targets of these projects may overlap—for example, reparations advocates likely believe that reparations would be an important symbolic gesture, not merely a material boon. However, projects differ in their primary emphases. In the following paragraphs, I lay out each cell in the intersecting target-by-goal typology, and then consider the diverse

array of projects in the fourth cell—symbolic repudiation that targets the state or society in general—in greater detail.

Government reparations

First, demands for direct material reparations from the government are the most instrumental and collectively-targeted of the set of efforts. Reparations advocates believe that compensation would materially benefit African Americans who have been unfairly disadvantaged by slavery, segregation, and subsequent wealth inheritance patterns. The bulk of discussion of the issue in the United States has concerned reparations payments by the federal government, with advocates arguing that non-blacks in general today benefit greatly from the historic expropriation of black labor over hundreds of years.⁴ Claims for government reparations are therefore demands for material compensation aimed at a broad collective. That reparations are enormously unpopular with the non-black public (Viles 2002, Michelson 2002) may well be an outcome of these factors, as reparations appear to benefit blacks at the material expense of non-blacks, while suggesting collective American responsibility for addressing past misdeeds—an idea easily conflated with holding non-blacks today guilty of their ancestors' crimes.

Corporate reparations

⁴ The classification of reparations as an instrumentally-driven project is admittedly complicated by movement advocates' likely awareness that the awarding of direct reparations appears extremely unlikely, and by the fact that reparations advocates sometimes argue for more indirect forms of repair than direct payments. For example, Robinson's *The Debt* (2000), widely regarded as the key book of the reparations movement, devotes fairly little attention to the idea of direct payments, and considers other types of repair such as support for black educational institutions, neighborhoods, and so on. Nonetheless, reparations advocates see making material demands as their preferred strategy, and advancing African Americans' standard of living as their primary goal.

While great prominence has been accorded to demands for reparations by government on behalf of society broadly conceived, other memory movements with material demands have targeted specific individuals or non-state institutions. For example, some have argued that corporations that benefitted from the Transatlantic slave trade should pay reparations, just as banks that profited from the Holocaust have paid reparations to families of those killed. In 2002, activist Deadria Farmer-Paellmann filed a \$1.4 trillion lawsuit against three New York Corporations on behalf of descendants of slaves; separately, J.P. Morgan and Wachovia each voluntarily gave several million dollars to scholarships for African Americans following the disclosure (required by a city of Chicago law championed by reparations advocate Dorothy Tillman and passed in 2002) that those corporations had accepted slaves as payment for debts. Although the actors targeted in these campaigns are more specific than the state or society in general, survey research has nonetheless found a high level of opposition to reparations by companies that benefited from slavery in the United States (Viles 2002).

Cold Case Re-trials

Spinner-Halev (2007, n.d.) has argued that symbolic steps can be important to groups who are plagued by historic (or enduring) injustices, in that these efforts can help restore a violated group's dignity, serve as a marker of regret by the perpetrators or those who have inherited the spoils of the perpetrators, and signal a desire to never repeats such violation. While some symbolic efforts primarily concern according honor to under-recognized personages, which has been the basis for efforts to name thousands of streets

after Martin Luther King (Dwyer and Alderman 2008), other efforts are principally about repudiation of particular villains or repudiating ugly pasts more broadly.

In the context of the resurgence of past racial violence, the third manifestation of the traumatic past in the present, consisting of efforts involving the symbolic repudiation of individuals, is the re-prosecutions of civil rights era murders that have flourished in the past two decades. These efforts have targeted individual killers, holding them rather than society in general responsible for past crimes. After reporter Jerry Mitchell watched the 1989 film *Mississippi Burning*, he launched research into the killing of Medgar Evers, which culminated in the 1994 conviction of Byron de la Beckwith and inspired two dozen additional cold case re-openings, many leading to convictions, during the following decade. In 2006 the FBI announced an expansion of efforts to re-prosecute old cold case murders, but this program closed in 2010 with progress in only a few cases, much to the anger of family members and activists. While African Americans today would receive little material benefit from convictions of very elderly killers, African Americans I spoke with in my research were strongly supportive of these efforts, seeing the unresolved killings as an enduring symbol of the state's lack of concern with justice for African Americans. To some activists, successful re-prosecution symbolizes that power-holders in society such as prosecutors and judges have rejected past bigotry. To others, such as family members and activists at one forum on re-prosecution I attended in Atlanta, successful re-prosecution efforts, whose success relies on the FBI and government officials—incorrectly described by several family members and advocates at that forum as “the same people who blocked the prosecutions fifty years ago”—are important in that they both symbolize and regenerate African American political power.

Though this understanding of trials' meaning is different than the version emphasizing white repentance, they share an emphasis on the transformation of the state's relationship to a historically subordinated group.

These efforts to prosecute individuals for civil rights crimes are not without risk. Even if successful, they may obliterate state and widespread public collusion with past racial violence from collective memory and allow states and cities that have not addressed present inequality to rehabilitate damaged reputations (Romano 2006, Cunningham 2008). For example, Romano argues that cold case re-trials, with their focus on individual killers, can erase past state financial and material sponsorship of anti-black terrorism from collective memory. Nonetheless, the potential risks of focusing on individuals and allowing states or cities to use re-trials to depict themselves as fundamentally changed has not deterred activists from pursuing this strategy. This may be because it is easy to feel strong emotions against individuals but harder to muster as much anger toward historic state structures, or because trials are dramatic and capture public attention in a way that commemorative commissions cannot, or because our culture's emphasis on individual "bad apple" explanations for social harms makes such explanations compelling both personally and politically to mnemonic activists.

Commemoration Projects

Activists seeking symbolic redress for past crimes have not solely relied on legal venues and claims against individuals. Several of my interviewees doubted the continued viability of prosecution given the passage of time (most unprosecuted civil rights killers are now likely dead, and everyone responsible for the bloodiest racial atrocities of the

early Twentieth Century is now dead). Yet to mnemonic activists, unresolved atrocities with dying or long-dead culprits nonetheless cry out for recognition; this imperative has helped give rise to some commemorative and educational projects not targeting individuals. Additional efforts, such as Greensboro, North Carolina's Truth and Reconciliation Commission addressing the 1979 killings of Communist protesters by Klansmen, have arisen out of failures of the legal system to convict. But the final set of efforts to repudiate past racial violence also features a more diffuse notion of responsibility than efforts to prosecute killers have adopted. These memory movements blend some characteristics of both the reparations and re-prosecution movements. They have involved symbolic repudiation (like in re-prosecution efforts) of horrific past acts not attributed to particular individuals, but with diffuse responsibility (like in the state-centered reparations movement). These efforts have been both national and local, and included non-state and state actors. And they have become progressively more common over the past several decades.

The modern resurgence in collective consciousness of post-slavery anti-black atrocities beyond the reach of prosecution began in 1982, when journalist Gary Moore re-discovered Florida's 1923 Rosewood Massacre. National attention to Moore's story helped fuel a successful compensation effort by survivors and their descendants. Clearly a materially-driven campaign in important ways, and inspired by the Japanese-American internment victims reparations push, the Rosewood effort inspired increased attention to similar past events across the country, even as it bore the seeds of copycat projects' material defeat: the Rosewood compensation bill was aided by the (mistaken) perception that it was a uniquely horrible event. Nonetheless, Florida lawmakers who passed the

compensation bill in 1994 included a clause prohibiting the state from ever providing compensation for other similar events (D’Orso 1996), and no other similar campaign for redress has succeeded since the Rosewood claims bill passed.

In the past decade and a half, the Rosewood Massacre’s resurgence has helped fuel the emergence of a set of projects that have largely shed its materially-driven approach. From 1995 to 2003, activists initially led by African American state legislator Don Ross sought financial compensation to survivors of Tulsa, Oklahoma’s 1921 white burning of the black section of town. This effort, which appeared partly modeled on Rosewood’s approach, failed in its material goals (Henry 2007), but attained enormous attention and yielded numerous educational and cultural projects around marking the incident. Tulsa’s effort helped inspire a late 1990s reparations and commemoration effort by NAACP members in Springfield, Missouri (site of an infamous 1906 triple lynching), and prominent figures in Tulsa’s campaign consulted in the launching of Wilmington, North Carolina’s centennial remembrance of the violent 1898 overthrow of its racially mixed government—a remembrance in which whites played key founding roles, and (perhaps not coincidentally) one which eschewed the goal of reparations as unrealistic and divisive. As of this writing, more than two dozen local memory movements to mark specific incidents of segregation era (pre-1954) racial violence against African Americans have emerged around the country, with heavy concentrations around Atlanta (five projects) and in Florida (five projects), fewer projects in the Midwest and Border South, and very few in the West, Northeast, or Deep South, outside the Atlanta area. Further, at least two umbrella groups uniting various racial violence memory projects—the Atlanta-based Southern Truth and Reconciliation and the Mississippi-based Alliance for Truth

and Racial Reconciliation—have been founded and become active in various efforts, including a recent push for a Mississippi Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Other projects not around specific incidents of violence, but closely related, include the “Without Sanctuary” traveling exhibit of lynching postcards and memorabilia that has traveled the country for the past decade, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors, Alabama’s Birmingham Pledge, which allows signatories to commit to rejecting racism, Richmond’s Hope in the Cities, an effort aimed at racial reconciliation, the re-enactment of a slave auction in Virginia in the 1990s, the U.S. Senate apology for inaction on lynching, and efforts by Brown and Emory Universities to investigate benefits they gained from slavery.

All of these efforts emphasize symbolic or cultural change over immediate material demands, but there are important differences within the goals they do pursue. These projects reckoning with past violence have attempted to bring honor to lynching and riot victims who met inglorious fates a century ago, sought to inspire young African Americans to set high aspirations by documenting how much worse racial oppression was several generations ago, and attempted to educate whites about past racial terrorism. At times, and for some individuals, these goals appear tied to broad present-day aspirations. For example, many of my interviewees mentioned the importance of learning from history so as to not repeat it, apparently suggesting that they saw learning about past racial violence as a means of hedging against its recurrence. Other interviewees maintained that understanding the past was importantly linked to addressing present-day racial inequality, though their responses to my probing suggested that they saw this link operating largely through education. The goal of honoring the dead was least often tied to

present issues, with numerous commemorators, ranging from the African American male curator of the “Without Sanctuary” exhibit to a wealthy white woman near single-handedly pursuing commemoration for a lynching victim, maintaining that honoring the dead was itself morally and emotionally significant, regardless of its effects. Finally, many of these projects have sought racial “reconciliation”—perhaps a misnomer since, as one commenter at a conference on racial violence and reconciliation I attended pointed out, the term suggests that “we were together in the first place.” Setting aside the potential inaccuracy of the term, it is by no means clear that this goal means the same thing to all actors involved in this array of projects.

In sum, America’s racially violent past has resurged in various ways, as advocates make material and symbolic demands of both broad collectives and particular targets. While materially-focused reparations efforts and civil rights re-trials have received the lion’s share of media and scholarly attention, primarily symbolic projects aimed at general repudiation, which are diverse in their location and geographic scope, constituencies, and goals, have received less attention. The rapid spread of these efforts, their variety, previous scholarly under-emphasis on symbolically-oriented movements, and the shortage of attention to local manifestations of broader national movements in the movements and memory studies literatures are important reasons that greater attention to these efforts is warranted.

An Agenda for Researching Memory Movements: Some Lines of Inquiry

In the remainder of the paper, I present eight primary (and several more secondary) hypotheses concerning the emergence, strategies, ecology, and reception of

memory movements broadly. I propose three hypotheses around movement emergence, three hypotheses that concern memory movements' forms, strategies, and reception, and two hypotheses that address movement interrelationships. I ground these hypotheses in prior theory, draw on my research on marking of old racial atrocities to further illustrate these hypotheses, and consider their applicability to other cases less formally.

When and where do memory movements emerge?

The first hypothesis addresses the macro-level conditions that facilitate the emergence and success of memory movements. Research in social movement studies has long argued that favorable “political opportunity structures” facilitate the emergence and success of challengers. Prior research provides reason to think that opportunity structures matter for memory movements, as well. Political opportunities have shaped the rise of a movement around reparations to former World War II sex slaves in Korea (Tsutsui 2006), as well as influenced the willingness of Japanese politicians to reckon with that country's crimes in World War II (Tsutsui 2009). South Africa's Truth Commission was only possible in the post-Apartheid regime (Gibson 2004), and movements to transform school curricula in the United States fared differently based in part on their ability to cultivate political alliances with school board members (Binder 2002). Political opportunities, may, however, take forms specific to memory when considering memory movements. In the realm of memory movements, my expectation that mnemonic opportunity structures—defined as a society or environment's capacity to promote new historic interpretations, the willingness of elite allies to accommodate such interpretations, and the openness of citizens to such interpretations—matter leads to *H1: Contexts with more*

open mnemonic opportunity structures will be more likely to see memory movements emerge and flourish.

Numerous examples from my research support the significance of mnemonic opportunity structures. A memory movement around Springfield, Illinois 1898 Race Riot flourished in that city in large part due to the dozens of commemorative institutions in Lincoln's home town, along with support from "insiders" with access to commemorative resources (such as the staff of the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum). Prominent movements such as those in Monroe, Georgia (around the Moore's Ford lynching) and Wilmington, North Carolina (around its 1898 riot) drew heavily on resources and allies from the nearby University of Georgia and UNC-Wilmington. Conversely, few movements have emerged in extremely rural areas without allies enabling them to draw on university or city resources, and those that have—such as in Pierce City, Missouri, Price, Utah, and Newnan, Georgia—have struggled greatly and attained little prominence. More broadly, that memory movements around past racial violence are occurring now, and not, say, in the 1950s, suggests that the opening of mnemonic opportunity structures to African Americans in the late Twentieth Century has positively impacted their ability to promulgate memory movements.⁵

A second hypothesis addresses the different kinds of groups that might be expected to engage in politics of memory. While numerous scholars have written on a global surge of efforts to right troubled pasts, the overwhelming majority of examples

⁵ Other factors emphasized in the political sociology literature are important to memory movements as well. I do not propose new hypotheses about all these processes because existing theories of social movements explain them well. For example, memory movements will arise more often and have greater success when their adherents have access to significant resources. Memory movements with roots in pre-existing organizations will be more common and more successful than those without such roots. Memory movements will be less common in highly repressive societies or climates.

from the literature concern efforts to reckon with traumatic pasts around race, ethnicity, or nationhood. In the United States, the most prominent politics of the past concern historic injustices toward African Americans and Native Americans, with Japanese Americans also receiving significant attention. That such injustices have had grave historic impacts should not blind us to the fact that there are many other groups whose members have been victims of atrocities in the past. Workers and labor movements, come to mind, as do women and sexual minorities. Spinner-Halev (2007, n.d.) argues persuasively that the cases of “historic injustice” that receive the most advocacy by their victims do so because they are actually cases of *enduring* injustice, and that reparations efforts by Native and African Americans would exert far less “pull” on those groups if past injustices remained identical but present-day equality was a reality (or if the future looked bright) for those groups. But this only partly addresses the riddle of why some, but not other groups, turn to the past as a strategy. To give but two examples, working women in the United States still are paid significantly less than working men, and this gap is partly rooted in historic factors. Gays and lesbians have faced and continue to face significant disparities. But these groups have not couched their demands for change in terms of historic injustice.

While I embrace Spinner-Halev’s claim that revisiting past traumas will be especially compelling in most cases for members of groups that face continued disadvantage, I additionally propose H2a: *Memory movements around troubled pasts are most likely for groups that have strong collective identity and collective memory distinct from majority culture*. Further, H2b: *Memory movements are especially likely to emerge around identities that are passed on through generations, where relevant disparities*

(such as inherited wealth inequality) are also passed on. While African Americans and white Americans live largely separate lives, most women live with men, and the magnitude of racial differences in political views and other social characteristics far outstrips such variation along the faultline of gender. Sexual minorities usually emerge from majority-heterosexual families, attenuating their personal link to victims of past injustice on the basis of sexuality; the sheer recentness of sexual orientation as a concept may also weaken gay and lesbian Americans' potential to engage in politics of the past. Neither sex nor gender nor sexual orientation is transmitted over generations, leaving race (and nation or ethnicity in some other cases) as a crucial collective identity with particular power to stoke memory movements. Of course, feminists celebrate key milestones in the women's movement, and gays and lesbians mark the anniversary of resistance at the Stonewall Inn (Armstrong and Cragg 2006). But these celebratory rites—perhaps fueled by optimism about a perceived decline in the social significance of gender and sexual orientation—bear little resemblance to the politics of trauma at the center of this paper.

My third hypothesis concerns the different meanings of and audiences for turns to traumatic pasts for different social groups. Perhaps the ultimate “successful” symbolic turn to past atrocity has been by Jewish memory entrepreneurs in the United States, who from the 1960s onward successfully promulgated the current popular understanding of the Holocaust among both Jews and non-Jews (Novick 2000). The modern widespread understanding of the Holocaust as simultaneously an important and attention-worthy marker of Jewish identity and as the most heinous atrocity in human history, as Novick notes, is markedly different from its previous mnemonic status, wherein few Jews wanted

to call attention to it and it was not depicted as a central element of World War II, let alone of human history. African Americans calling attention to a “Black Holocaust” were inspired by the success of Jews’ memory project (Ruffins 2007). Yet the status of African Americans and Jews in the United States is quite different, with blacks falling well below average on every indicator of standing in the U.S. while Jewish Americans are unusually successful by most measures, especially in cultural production. Novick (2000) shows that Jews’ success in depicting their past victimization or “weakness” is attributable in large part to the cultural power Jewish Americans had acquired by the 1970s. Yet today, Jewish cultural producers continue to emphasize the importance of the Holocaust. Is this ongoing memory movement—taking place among one of America’s most successful and integrated minority groups—occurring for the same reasons as the turn to past trauma among African Americans?

I argue that it is not. As Ruffins (2007) and Dwyer and Alderman (2008) argue, there is an important distinction between *internal* and *external* audiences for cultural productions. Depictions of African American history are sometimes geared primarily toward African Americans, but sometimes designed to educate white Americans (or people of other races) about black history; the same can be said of any minority group. While the rise of Holocaust memory was initially aimed at both Jewish-internal and external audiences, recent perceptions by Jewish leaders of increasing religious intermarriage and declining religious belief among young Jews have led to increased efforts to craft Holocaust memory as a central internal element in Jewish identity (Berger 2010). That is, the ongoing concern with past trauma among American Jews is in large

part an ironic outcome of the scope of Jewish integration, designed in large part to maintain a collective identity that is threatened by Jews' success.⁶

The same cannot be said of African Americans, who face little “threat” of identity dilution through assimilation. To the extent that African American memory projects have been principally geared toward internal audiences, they have usually emphasized past *heroism*, as in calling attention to black resistance to the slave trade, rather than victimhood, as African American cultural producers have sought to resist what they see as internally-demoralizing ideas of black passivity and helplessness. Cultural productions by African Americans that emphasize past victimhood have been in important part geared toward white audiences; for example, the (black) curator of the highly successful *Without Sanctuary* lynching memorabilia exhibit told me that the (white) collector's principal hope in the project was to educate other whites about the scope of past lynchings. Depictions of past black heroism geared toward external audiences began to gain widespread currency in the immediate wake of the civil rights movement, perhaps in part as a triumphant self-celebration of movement success (Meyer 2006). That representations of past African American trauma geared in major part toward external audiences have appeared with increasing frequency in the 1980s and onward—in a conservative era when black economic progress has stalled in many ways—is likely not coincidental, as

⁶ There are two important qualifiers here. First, the Holocaust is invoked by non-American and American Jews for external audiences with some regularity in the context of Arab-Israeli politics. For example, comments by Iran's President doubting the Holocaust were widely seen as an attempt to undermine Israel, and spurred an effort to call attention to the Holocaust. The calling of external audiences' attention to the Holocaust on the basis of the Jewish state's vulnerability in international politics has taken place at the same time as the calling of attention to the Holocaust for different reasons among an internal audience of American Jews. Second, some memory projects among African Americans emphasizing trauma have gained large internal audiences; for example, the Moore's Ford lynching re-enactment drew a primarily black audience. However, the ultimate stated purpose of that re-enactment was to pursue justice in the courts—a goal hinging on the attention of a largely white audience. The hypothesis of a distinction on the basis of internal and external audiences is not rigidly deterministic; rather, it concerns degrees of difference.

externally-oriented depictions of trauma may serve to remind white viewers that depictions of black progress and victory show only part of the story. That is, while depictions of victimization are purportedly “about the past,” these representations exist in the present, perhaps raising the possibility in viewers’ eyes that oppression continues in the present. The general principles that emerge are these: H3a: *Among more successful historically-distinct groups whose distinct identity appears threatened by success, traumatic pasts will be used principally to maintain internal collective identity.* H3b: *Among still-oppressed groups, especially those whose present-day subordination is underestimated by majority group members, traumatic pasts will be invoked principally for external audiences, while heroic pasts will be invoked as a means of inspiring and maintaining self-respect among group members.*

The framework of capabilities and motivations may provide an additional useful route to thinking about these hypotheses. If broad public (external) awareness of a traumatic past is a function of a historically slighted group’s ability to disseminate awareness of that past along with its desire to do so, a group’s success will interact differently with these two factors. Present-day economic *frustration* has given African Americans *motivation* to disseminate awareness of historic injustice (Spinner-Halev 2007), at the same time that it has lessened their *capability* to spread awareness of the Black Holocaust concept. Similarly, despite ongoing calls for redress by Native Americans motivated by present-day economic despair, little public attention has been devoted to this issue, likely because Native Americans remain impoverished and politically marginal. Conversely, economic *empowerment* was important in giving

American Jews the *capability* to put their past on the public agenda.⁷ This same economic empowerment among Jews has reduced Jewish *motivation* to continue to depict the Holocaust for external audiences—the Holocaust is not raised as an explanation of “progress” bypassing American Jews, because few Jews feel that progress has bypassed them—yet the absence of a present-day economic basis for calling attention to the Holocaust has been offset by the institutionalization of Holocaust memory (Novick 2000), the perceived need to call attention to the Holocaust as a basis for Israel’s legitimacy, and the increasing importance of the Holocaust to internal collective identity (Berger 2010).⁸

The forms, strategies, and reception of memory movements

A second set of hypotheses concerns the forms and strategies of memory movements. While do some movements pursue redress through legislatures or courts, while others avoid institutional politics altogether? Why do some promulgate broad

⁷ It is instructive to note that according to Census figures there are barely more Jews than Native Americans in the United States, and that the near-destruction of the native population in the U.S. was perpetrated by the U.S. while the Holocaust was perpetrated by another country entirely.

⁸ If this is the case, why have African Americans nonetheless attained notable success in popularizing the idea that they have suffered from historic injustice? In the past several decades, museums focused on slavery have flourished, and states across the Southeast United States have adopted forms of civil rights tourism that may emphasize victories but do not omit struggle and victimization. Polletta (1998) argues that the real but constrained nature of African American political empowerment over the past several decades helps explain this phenomenon. Because of residential segregation and racial voting patterns, African Americans in the US have attained significant representation in the U.S. House of Representatives (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans_in_the_United_States_Congress), without ever attaining majority control of a state or national legislature. Representation offers political empowerment, but this empowerment has often been limited to speaking out on issues of significance rather than passing legislation directly addressing black interests (Polletta 1998). That some level of black political empowerment has coincided with the freezing of progress toward racial economic equality has been a recipe for African Americans’ increased interest in the past, and in the ability to get this interest onto the public agenda (as in widespread attention to *The Debt*), but in little ability to act on this interest through legislation. The outcome has been success in bringing historic injustice against African Americans into public awareness, success in some symbolic campaigns, and failure in nearly all efforts at material repair.

conceptions of responsibility for the past, while others target blame more narrowly? My first hypothesis concerning forms and strategy addresses the marked geographical patterning of different ways that checkered pasts have resurged, and draws on social movement research on the channeling of dissent (Jenkins and Eckart 1986, Earl 2003). As formulated by Jenkins and Eckart, the channeling hypothesis suggests that elite sponsorship of social movements will drive movements to professionalize and eschew adversarial tactics, potentially limiting their effectiveness. Earl (2003) argues that state authorities also channel movements; for example, states may crack down on certain forms of protest but not others.

Channeling may have influenced the forms that memory movements around past racial violence have taken. Fatal racial violence against African Americans was heavily concentrated in the Deep South, with some violence in the Midwest and little in the West or Northeast. But commemorative projects have flourished only in some parts of the South. Of the two and a half dozen projects, five were in Florida, five were in the greater Atlanta area, most of the rest were sprinkled throughout the South and Midwest, and none were in Mississippi, Louisiana, or Alabama. (The nation's largest lynching memorial, built in 2003, is in Minnesota, a state with only a handful of lynchings.) The Atlanta area, despite its location in an old "Deep South" state, is the country's primary center of African American cultural, political, and economic power, while Florida—historically the South's leader in per-capita black lynchings—is a "swing state" that is home to large numbers of relocated Northerners and has been politically unlike other Southern states for the past two decades. That commemorative projects have emerged so strongly in the more politically liberal areas of the South, while remaining absent from the states

associated with high levels of racial intolerance, seems to suggest that liberal environments may be more conducive to the emergence of projects symbolically marking traumatic pasts.

This picture becomes more complicated, though, when one considers another way the past has resurged: through re-prosecutions of civil rights era murders. The wave of re-prosecutions, which has unfolded as a result of pushes by family members and journalists as well as through internal FBI decisions, and has relied heavily on both state and federal courts, has been heavily concentrated on Mississippi, with about two-thirds of cold case reopening occurring there. Alabama has been a distant second to Mississippi, and no other state has come close. Georgia and Florida have seen no successful re-prosecutions. This pattern cannot be attributed solely to the geographical distribution of civil rights era murders; while Mississippi did indeed lead the country in these killings, its lead in re-prosecutions is far greater.

While part of the process through which cold cases are re-opened and re-prosecuted is a black box to researchers due to the inscrutability of FBI processes, some of the energy around re-prosecution has come from the grassroots, with civil rights advocates, journalists, and family members pushing FBI or state investigations forward. Considering the distribution of re-prosecutions and commemorations of earlier violence together, it is striking that the most politically open areas of the Southern United States have played host to many commemoration projects where blame for past injustices is dispersed widely, but to no efforts to target particular individuals for specific historic crimes—while the exact opposite pattern holds in the more closed political environment of the Deep South.

Scholars of race relations in the South (e.g. Kruse 2005) have studied varied responses by white elites in the South to the successes of the civil rights movement. Kruse argues that in the Atlanta area, white elites during and after the civil rights movement chose to adapt to increased black political power through selective accommodation; that is, by cooperating with and seeking to co-opt black economic leaders while leaving the concerns of working-class black citizens unaddressed. This approach was different than that adopted by states like Mississippi in the 1970s and 1980s, where white elites continued to fiercely resist any kind of accommodation (Crespino 2007, Irons 2010). The more confrontational white-black relationship that developed as a result in the Deep South states may have fueled civil rights advocates' turn to the confrontational yet individualized strategy of focusing on particular past crimes by individuals and seeking resolution through the legal system. This is both because addressing collective responsibility would be more difficult in these environments, and because blaming specific individuals for crimes is a confrontational approach that seems to "fit" in the broader confrontational environment that activists in more challenging environments acclimated to in the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, present-day white state leaders in states like Mississippi and Alabama have become aware of the reputational benefits that they can gain through hosting trials that seem to repudiate past bigotry (Romano 2006) yet leave collective responsibility unaddressed, leading to cooperation by state investigative bureaus and court systems.^{9, 10} Therefore,

⁹ That courts and some political elites in Mississippi have cooperated with and even encouraged re-trials suggests that the state's political elite are no longer hostile to all forms of accommodation. Certainly, much has changed in the last four decades in Mississippi. Regardless, key figures in the state's civil rights community and among those seeking prosecution came of age in a much more confrontational and hostile climate, which may have facilitated the sense that apparently confrontational strategies (such as trials) are an appropriate "fit" for the environment.

H4: *more open political environments will fuel memory movement emphasis on broader collective responsibility, while more closed environments, where issues of collective responsibility remain uncomfortably close, will foster an emphasis on individual accountability for past injustices.*¹¹

The next two hypotheses about the form taken by efforts to reckon with difficult paths concerns the different meanings of the past in the present to dominant groups, historically subordinated groups, and presently subordinated groups. Most African Americans favor material reparations for slavery (Viles 2002), even if direct connections between particular incidents and present-day material conditions for some beneficiaries are remote in the past or unclear. Demands for reparations by Native Americans have

¹⁰ Post-transitional Truth Commissions such as South Africa's address recent wounds, yet often do so to explore collective responsibility. That such commissions are able to address collective responsibility is likely an outgrowth of having the political power of the state behind them, along with the fact that they are able to offer amnesty in exchange for participation.

¹¹ An alternative or additional explanation for the geographic patterning of symbolic resurgence of the past is simpler: perhaps civil rights advocates in Mississippi have turned to re-prosecutions rather than commemorations because the killings that re-prosecutions can address are more recent. While early Twentieth Century racial violence in Mississippi was worse (in fatalities) than that of the 1960s, attention to the past is finite, and people alive today might care more about more recent injustices, not least because they may have known the victims and because they killers may be alive to punish. The recent past is more emotionally compelling, and the opportunity that prosecuting selected individuals offers to focus one's anger on a concentrated target is seen as preferable to the less satisfying and more abstract notion of collective blame. But as the co-founder of Atlanta's Southern Truth and Reconciliation, a jury selection consultant who had played an important role in cold case re-prosecutions before becoming involved in broader commemorative projects, told me, an important factor in the rise of broadly focused commemoration projects has been that re-prosecution is becoming less viable over time, with killers dying off and evidence trails growing ever-colder. Since widespread civil rights violence waned later in Mississippi than in other states, the focus of re-prosecution efforts on that state might be attributed to the greater likelihood that killers there remain alive today. And the recent emergence of a Mississippi Truth Project gathering oral histories of civil rights era violence—developing beginning in 2009, at a time when re-prosecution appears to be waning—suggests that the passage of time may be shifting tactics in Mississippi as well. According to this line of reasoning, then, memory movements' choice between symbolic strategies that rely on individual versus collective attribution of responsibility is driven by the availability of targets: Therefore scholars should also consider H4b: *The emotional appeal of strategies targeting individuals will lead to a predominance of movements using this tack when it is available, and a paucity of movements adopting symbolic strategies oriented toward collective blame. Conversely, movements emphasizing collective responsibility will arise in cases where individual attribution of responsibility is no longer plausible.*

also gained currency, albeit little success. Conversely, while Jews have sought and attained some reparations from Germany for the Holocaust, nearly all this compensation has been narrowly targeted at survivors and descendants not long after the crime in question occurred, or granted directly to Israel shortly after the Holocaust when it was young and its existence precarious, rather than awarded to Jews in general; as Spinner-Halev argues, Jews' economic success would render present-day demands for compensation based on historic injustice—which in practice are usually about enduring, rather than historic, injustice—less credible. That Japanese Americans in the US suffered past injustice during World War II is undeniable, but again, compensation awarded in that case was sought and attained for specific victims, rather than Japanese Americans in general. On this basis, it appears that members of presently subordinated groups are especially likely to seek material redress, even if the crimes they address are ancient.

This principle of group status and material versus symbolic demands can also be extended in two ways: first, to those members of dominant groups who become involved in efforts to heal the wounds of the past, and second, to explain varied attitudes around the meaning of past racial violence in the present within members of a historically wronged group. The general hypothesis is this, H5: *the higher the standing of a group or individual member of a group, the more likely that efforts to repudiate traumatic pasts will be couched in symbolic terms. The lower the standing of an individual or group, the more likely such efforts will be couched in material terms.* The existence of within-group variation along the lines of social standing and material privilege can be seen in commemoration projects like Wilmington's 1898 Race Riot Foundation and Atlanta's Coalition to Remember the 1906 Race Riot. In both cases, project leaders I spoke with

noted their decision not to pursue material reparations, and noted that this decision had frustrated lower-class African Americans, who went on to have little involvement with the projects. White leaders, as well as middle and upper class African American leaders, may have been sympathetic to demands for reparations, but frequently dismissed them early in projects as infeasible and politically toxic.

A final hypothesis on forms and strategies concerns the meaning of racial reconciliation around old racial wounds more generally. Anecdotal evidence from an array of projects suggests that efforts at reconciling around America's history of racial division bear somewhat different meanings to whites and blacks. I provide two notable examples of white activists' interpretations of reconciliation, before explaining how these interpretations might be structured by race. The first example comes from a conference I attended on remembrance of old racial violence at the University of Mississippi in late 2007. On the final day of the conference, one participant, who had played a role in Virginia efforts toward racial reconciliation, rose to speak about his experience coming to realize that his ancestors had owned thousands of slaves. He spoke movingly about his realization of this fact, and his successful effort to track down a descendant of those held in bondage by his ancestors. The central act of repentance he described was an offer of apology to the descendants, and its acceptance (and the offer of forgiveness) from those he met. He spoke of a sense of individual obligation to learn about the lives of the descendants, and to reconcile with them.

The second example draws more broadly on reconciliation projects that have sprouted across the nation. As Corcoran (2010) describes in his book on the "Hope in the Cities" project, Richmond, Virginia, the former Confederate capitol, has become a center

of efforts toward racial reconciliation. The approach adopted by the Hope in the Cities organization—as described in this book, in its manuals, and by its director at a workshop I attended—heavily emphasizes the importance of individual relationships to reconciliation. According to the model offered by Hope in the Cities, the formation of inter-racial relationships and the development of an ability to hear alternative perspectives are at the heart of racial reconciliation. For example, Corcoran describes the experience of an African American woman he interviewed who had entered the home of a Confederate descendant to discuss the meaning of the Confederate battle flag as part of the city’s reconciliation initiative—the same flag that the homeowner displayed on her mantle. The African American describes her initial revulsion at the flag, but then explains that the process of hearing the white homeowner talk about meaning of the flag transformed her understanding of what it meant; she concludes by describing an increased sense of empathy for the white woman displaying a symbol she previously viewed as hateful.

I do not question the sincerity of the first activist’s emotions around the discovery that his ancestors had owned slaves, nor do I doubt that the empathy-building approach offered by Hope in the Cities may improve relationships between members of different races. But what is striking about the individualized approach to reconciliation described in both cases is the near-erasure of broader structural issues. In the first case, the white activist framed the issue as one of repudiating the sins of his ancestors. In so doing, he simultaneously took responsibility for actions he had no control over (he in no way caused the enslavement of the black man’s forebears) while ignoring a pressing situation he did control—that is, the issue of his benefits today from the ongoing fruits of stolen

labor and stolen wealth that could have been transferred over generations. In the second case, the idea that opposite sides of an issue should be open to alternate perspectives was allowed to obscure the historic fact that the “Confederate flag” displayed today is not “the” Confederate flag, but instead a specific battle flag that was adopted into widespread use during the 1950s and 1960s as a symbol of resistance to civil rights (Coski 2005). More broadly, the idea that both sides of historic conflicts have pain and grievances appeared to be transmuted into the view that both sides are equally responsible for that pain and that this division can be transcended through individual reconciliation—an impression reinforced by the project’s overwhelming emphasis on “individual responsibility,” a phrase that appears dozens of times in the project director’s book (Corcoran 2010).

These examples suggest the following general hypothesis, H6: *In the context of global concern for “reconciliation” around historic divisions, members of socially dominant groups will be more likely to frame reconciliation as centered on individual apology, repentance and forgiveness, while members of subordinate groups will be more likely to see reconciliation in structural and historic terms.* Majority-white views of reconciliation as an individual-level project that is centrally about “changed hearts” are quite consistent with dominant white racial frames that see racism as about individual bigotry or, less simplistically, about individual interactions (Bonilla-Silva 2003). This does not mean that all or most whites involved in reconciliation efforts see reconciliation through a simple individualistic lens; my conversations with white activists revealed an array of views on the topic, and several whites expressed skepticism toward the individualistic framing of reconciliation. But the idea of reconciliation has spread beyond

the handful of people who attend conferences on and are heavily invested in the topic, and in the broader population, it is quite likely that racial distinctiveness in views of reconciliation is even more pronounced.

The Ecology of Memory Movements

A third set of hypotheses addresses the relationships between different projects addressing buried pasts. Just as world polity theorists have documented the diffusion of international human rights norms (e.g. Tsutsui 2006) and movement scholars have shown that social movement approaches can “spillover” from one movement to another (Meyer and Whittier 1994), so too do commemorative movements influence each other. It is clear that global diffusion has played a role in the resurgence of once-buried pasts both around the world and, to some extent, in the United States. The rise of Holocaust consciousness in the United States and globally during the 1960s and 1970s was perhaps the first extremely prominent effort at a politics of the past. Within the United States, various ethnic groups in the 1980s and beyond have sought to emulate Jews’ success in spreading awareness of the Holocaust; for example, efforts to depict a “Black Holocaust” (see Ruffins 2007) drew directly on the Holocaust model. The global rise of Truth Commissions provides further evidence of diffusion: South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while not the first of its kind, gained worldwide attention and generated widespread interest in similar initiatives in other transitional societies, while the establishment of groups like New York City’s International Center for Transitional Justice helped institutionalize the know-how and capacity for states to conduct efforts like these.

However, extant theories of diffusion in general (Soule 2004), and diffusion of international norms in particular (Tsutsui 2006), provide solid explanations for the spread of the memory movement phenomenon generally. A more interesting question concerns the impact of movements on each other when those movements address the same general buried past. What impact do particular memory movements—say, the Without Sanctuary lynching memorabilia exhibit, or the Rosewood reparations effort—have on other memory movements, such as other local commemorative projects or re-prosecution efforts, which address different aspects of the same general trauma? The core insights of research on diffusion in movements (Soule 2004) suggest that efforts to mark a particular racial atrocity—or to mark African Americans’ traumatic past in the United States more generally—will spark other efforts. This is because the emergence of a memory movement lowers the perceived risk and raises the perceived feasibility and importance of founding other, similar movements—especially where there are direct communication channels between activists. This expectation is in some tension with ecological perspectives on movement “industries” which stress that similar movement organizations compete for finite resources, and hold that similarity to existing organizations leaves new efforts without the unique niche that such endeavors need to thrive and draw attention and money (McCarthy and Zald 1977). It is also somewhat at odds with perspectives in collective memory emphasizing “symbolic condensation,” or the biologically rooted but socially reinforced tendency of human societies to reduce complicated historic phenomena to single individuals or single events—a process at work in the personification over time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and female civil rights activism in the figure of Rosa Parks, who actually played a fairly small role in the boycott

and the movement, and the attendant erasure from collective memory of several other more important activists as Parks' star rose (Schwartz 2009). The organizational-ecological and symbolic condensation perspectives would likely argue that various efforts to mark racial violence may compete with each other, as (for example) several past incidents vie to be known as the representative case standing in for lynching or racial violence more generally.

How have these dynamics of diffusion and competition out played out in the realm of racial violence remembrance? In my interviews with commemorators, the theme of being inspired by or drawing lessons from other projects emerged dozens of times. Various scholars have written on the global spread of reckoning with troubled past; this global process also affected the United States, most prominently through South African Truth Commission chair Desmond Tutu's stay at Emory University in the late 1990s. The founders of Atlanta's Southern Truth and Reconciliation—an umbrella group that sought to play a central role in four different local efforts to mark old racial violence—credited Tutu's stay in Atlanta and his injunction that Americans should address America's troubled history (rather than focusing solely on that of other nations) with inspiring them to found the group. They also accorded great significance to the success of the Without Sanctuary project in drawing record-breaking crowds to its Atlanta display as another impetus for their efforts to address old racial violence in Georgia. A similar process was visible within the realm of local commemorative projects, as numerous commemorators remarked on the influence the early Rosewood and Tulsa projects had had on them. And the 1990s-2000s resurgence of interest in re-prosecuting old civil rights murders was heavily influenced by the success of the first case, according to the journalist I spoke with

whose efforts led to the first prosecution and several other sources. The apparent diffusion effects of these efforts can be seen geographically: the heavy concentration of commemorative projects in the greater Atlanta area can be attributed in large part to the impact of the Without Sanctuary project and the Tutu visit on Atlanta, as well as to the sharing of personnel between projects, while the concentration of re-prosecutions in Mississippi and Alabama may indicate that success in the first case inspired those nearby to pursue similar efforts.

But diffusion is not the entire story. In some aspects of the resurgence of buried racial tragedy, projects appear to have competed for attention and success. Perhaps the most striking example is Rosewood's reparations claims bill. D'Orso (1997) argues that the Rosewood bill succeeded in part because the Rosewood massacre was (incorrectly) widely seen as an unparalleled event—had non-black supporters of the bill known that many other similar tragedies had occurred, they would have seen the Rosewood survivors of less deserving of special attention, and would have feared setting a precedent for other reparations claims. During the Rosewood reparations hearings, in fact, some attention did emerge around Ocoee, Florida's 1920 election-related riot, which some (e.g. Ortiz 2005) have argued may have been bloodier and more historically significant than Rosewood's massacre. This attention culminated in the Rosewood compensation bill's more reluctant supporters successfully demanding a clause in the bill ruling out state compensation for any similar events (such as Ocoee's) as a condition of the bill's passage. Rosewood's success foreclosed the possibility of similar success around Ocoee, with perhaps the most salient difference between the two cases being simply that Rosewood advocates gained the limelight first. The process here is in some ways similar to that described in

Armstrong and Cragé's (2006) account of how gay resistance at the Stonewall Inn in 1969 became the "founding myth" of gay liberation: Stonewall was not the first or most intrinsically "worthy" case of gay resistance to police raids, but rather was the first to gain a spotlight bright enough to endure, for reasons associated with the 1960s-1970s spread of national gay media and communication networks rather than with the event itself.

An additional process of competition for the limelight similar to that seen around the Rosewood compensation bill may be at work in the dynamics of commemorative movements around local massacres, albeit through a different mechanism. While commemorative movements appear to spark other movements nearby, the projects that have attained the most media attention—those around Rosewood, Florida's 1923 massacre, Duluth, Minnesota's 1920 lynching memorial, Springfield, Illinois' 1908 race riot commemoration, Wilmington, North Carolina's 1898 race riot commemoration, Mims, Florida's 1951 assassination of Harry T. Moore, Oconee County, Georgia's 1946 Moore's Ford lynching, Atlanta's 1906 race riot, and Tulsa, Oklahoma's 1921 riot—are widely dispersed. Meanwhile, commemorative projects around specific incidents that have been sparked by similar nearby projects have seen little success by this measure. For example, the other Georgia projects inspired by the Moore's Ford group have seen little success and attention, in part because they have faced resistance to the involvement of "outsiders" from other cities' projects, but also perhaps because it is difficult to call public attention to more than several distinct but highly similar tragedies in the same geographical area, so those that made a mark first retain the spotlight.

The more general hypotheses are these: H7: *Memory movements around some aspect of or some particular incident from a traumatic past will inspire other movements around other pieces of that same general past, as they increase the perceived importance of and lower the perceived risk of addressing that traumatic past.* However, H8: *These movements will compete for limited public attention and resources, yielding the result that few highly similar memory movements will flourish within the same geographical area, unless these similar movements lay claim to different niches.*¹² This introduction of geographic space and a distinction between emergence and success helps resolve the apparent contradiction between social movement and collective memory theories' expectations around the dynamics of diffusion and competition, as previous theories (e.g. Schwartz 2009) had attended to national attention broadly, without accounting for geographic scope. The expectation of competition appears to apply best in the realm of commemorative projects marking specific local tragedies, where public attention is especially germane. I expect (and the record thus far confirms) that it would be much less relevant in the realm of state prosecutions of individuals, where victims' families are not placated by successful prosecution in cases other than their own, and where limited public attention is less relevant than the assignment of state resources to prosecution—a

¹² In other words, dynamics of competition need not occur when projects marking the general and projects marking the specific coincide within the same space; for example, in Atlanta, the Without Sanctuary project that marked lynching and racial violence in general did not weaken the Atlanta Race Riot's prospects for gaining attention, and may have enhanced them, because the first project, rather than competing with the second, provided a broader framework through which the second could be better understood. More broadly, Atlanta's extremely high capacity for African American historical projects (on the basis of its role as a center of black American life) means there is likely far more room for multiple projects there than in other areas.

condition that encourages diffusion rather than competition, as the institutionalization of cold case re-prosecution lowers the costs of each successive prosecution.¹³

Conclusions

This paper has intersected social movement and collective memory literatures in pursuit of two goals: first, to describe the substantively important but under-recognized phenomenon of memory movements around past racial violence in the United States, and second, to develop a set of hypotheses around such movements with broader applicability beyond the cases described here. I have argued that memory movements are increasingly frequent and that white-black racial politics in the present-day United States is the site of an especially important set of cases of this phenomenon, one which is intellectually well-suited for both testing and honing memory and movement theory.

Future research might test the propositions around memory movements outlined in this paper, and develop new ones, using a variety of methods and across a range of cases. Perhaps the most obvious cases to examine concern the politics of other minority groups in the United States and other Western societies. As the Hispanic and Asian American shares of the U.S. population grow, and as the political and economic influence of these groups increases, to what extent will racially-structured collective memory become a political battlefield? The 2010 move by the state of Arizona to ban the teaching of ethnic studies as an apparent response to perceived Latino “threat” suggests that memory and identity may already be significant sites of struggle. That Mexican and

¹³ The global rise of Truth Commissions is another example in which dynamics of diffusion occur, but competition does not, because each truth commission addresses a different buried past. Were a country to adopt multiple truth commissions on the same issue, competition among them seems quite likely.

Chinese Americans were targets of significant racial atrocities in the western United States further suggests that concern for these past atrocities may rise if these groups feel themselves shut out of full participation in society—or if some in these groups feel collective identity threatened by “too much” success. Memory movement politics may also prove relevant in cases such as Muslim incorporation into Western Europe, participation of aborigines in Australian society, and Native Americans in Canada and the United States. More broadly, the rise of dozens of Truth Commissions over the past several decades indicates that the politics of past tragedy and present reconciliation deserve further exploration in an array of non-Western contexts, potentially including societies that have experienced genocides or significant atrocities (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi, the former Yugoslavia), those that are home to enduring conflicts over memory (e.g. Israel/Palestine, India/Pakistan), and in societies like China, where government efforts to “control the past” (Orwell 1949) co-exist with rapid economic and social modernization for most citizens.

There are other aspects of memory movements worth addressing beyond those covered by the hypotheses in this paper. First, scholars might investigate influences on how broader publics receive and react to memory movements. The forces shaping reception in some ways may be similar to those shaping forms and trajectories, as forms and trajectories are in part shaped by commemorators’ predictions of how publics will react. In the realm of addressing past racial violence, reparations demands on government are extremely unpopular, but so is the idea of private companies paying reparations (Viles 2002).¹⁴ Symbolic movements addressing broad collectives have yielded mixed

¹⁴ While further investigation is needed to discern the reasons for this opposition, it is possible that the specter of reparations toward minorities from *any* source may stir racial resentment, may be seen as

receptions, with critics urging that “sleeping dogs be left to lie,” or that “ugly pasts” should not be brought up. Those projects that have been more accepted seem to have cast responsibility in the most non-threatening terms, as in the prominence that Wilmington’s 1898 Foundation accorded to the statement that “No one alive today was responsible for what happened in 1898” (Bellamy and Cantwell 2008)—a statement that was successful in drawing several prominent descendants of that riot’s perpetrators into supporting the project, according to several of my interviewees. Finally, there appears to have been widespread public support for civil rights cold case trials that target individuals, with state and city “boosters” who once sought to cover up troubled histories sometimes coming to support these trials and their attendant publicity, as a means of showcasing a break with a now-shameful past (Romano 2006). Based on this evidence, if the case of old racial violence is representative of memory movements more broadly, we might evaluate whether memory movements to repudiate traumatic pasts through blaming particular individuals tied to specific incidents gain support more easily than those whose depict broader collectives as responsible. Closely related, it may be that projects that seek material repair for historic injustice will attain less support among the public (other than members of the historically slighted group) than those aimed at symbolic redress, perhaps even if the material repair sought is not publicly funded.

Also in the realm of reception, the success of a compensation claim by survivors of Rosewood’s 1923 massacre and the failure of a very similar claim by Tulsa’s 1921 Race Riot survivors, both in the mid-1990s, suggests that framing may affect memory

promulgating the idea of trans-generational responsibility, or may be seen as a precursor to government reparations.

movement outcomes. While advocates' narrow framing of the Rosewood claim as about unjust expropriation of private property struck a chord with a prominent Cuban-American Republican legislator, leading to his co-sponsorship of the Rosewood claims bill, Tulsa activists' broad depiction of their claim as centrally about just desserts for oppression by whites triggered defensiveness by white legislators and Oklahomans (Henry 2007).¹⁵ Future research should investigate other memory movements to discern whether framing demands as appeals to highly-regarded and unthreatening principles, rather than in more conflictual terms of redress to a minority group for broad injustices, results in greater success.

Another set of questions concerns opposition, repression, and counter-memory movements. Wilmington, North Carolina's 1898 Foundation and Race Riot Commission prompted a counter-reaction in the form of an extensive website claiming to debunk the 1898 Foundation's historic interpretation and aiming to show that the coup was justified. Greensboro's Truth Commission faced strong opposition, and local projects aimed at repudiating past lynchings have struggled to gain traction in those cases where the lynching victim is widely believed today to have been guilty of murder. Investigating how and why opposition to memory movements emerges would be a worthy endeavor. Further, it is noteworthy that memory movement activists often anticipate public reactions and plan around perceived opposition. In several of the cases described previously, groups chose not to call for reparations out of fear of arousing opposition

¹⁵ I do not claim that framing was the most significant cause of the two claims bills' different fates. It appears likely that political opportunities mattered more. D'Orso (1996), Henry (2007), and Bryant (2010) argue convincingly that had the Rosewood bill been considered a year later, after Republicans surged in the state legislature following the 1994 election, it would have been voted down. They also suggest several other factors, best theorized as related to political opportunities or political contexts, that were important in the divergent outcomes.

around an unattainable goal. In Georgia, one of the central activists in the Moore's Ford project told me of deciding to back out of another effort to have a nearby high school's Amnesty International club investigate local lynchings when he heard about plans by Georgia's Association of Black Elected Officials to re-enact the Moore's Ford lynchings, on the grounds that the high school students' parents would be outraged by the inflammatory depiction. Investigation of memory movements' strategic choices (Jasper 2004) through qualitative methods could be fruitful in better understanding how activists understand and deal with perceived tradeoffs between moral purity and practical utility (Bernstein 1997, Meyer 2006).

A final important and challenging set of questions around memory movements concerns their ultimate impacts. As Giugni (1998) asks, "Was it worth the effort?" In the past two decades, scholars in both movement studies and memory studies have worked to address lacunae concerning the impacts of memory on attitudes and behaviors and the impact of movements on political and other outcomes. Broad cultural impacts are notoriously difficult to measure (Earl 2004). There is no doubt that individuals and collectives generally take for granted that memory matters—imagine the outrage that a proposal to erect a statue of Adolf Hitler would draw—yet research on the actual impact of memory or memory projects remains scant, and some work (e.g. Polletta 1998, Young 1992) warns that commemoration risks reinforcing the "past-ness" of that which is commemorated rather than serving the goals of those in the present pushing commemoration. Some research (e.g. Griffin and Bollen 2009; Harris 2006; Gibson 2004) has begun to address the impact of individual-level memory on attitudes and action. Further work on memory movements, which can draw on insights from both memory and

movement studies, might be especially useful in understanding the impacts of memory on society and of movements on culture. Scholars might investigate whether memory movements around past racial atrocities appear to trigger changes in how local media discuss race, or whether local campaigns to promulgate awareness are successful. Though studies of attitudinal and behavioral changes in participants in projects around history, trauma, and reconciliation (such as Richmond's Hope in the Cities dialogues) may be useful, researchers must carefully address issues of self-selection into such activities, and limited time horizons in measuring effects, when seeking to draw conclusions with broader applicability. This line of inquiry should draw on a broad range of cases, perhaps even investigating topics like whether efforts in the 2000's to depict Ronald Reagan as an unusually popular president (Bunch 2009) or to cast the New Deal as an economic failure yielded political dividends for their advocates. In one sense, there is little doubt that memory movements "make history" (Flacks 1989), but whether contesting the past is an effective means of "making history" in the broader sense of reshaping the present and future remains very much an open question. Insight into outcomes from an array of memory movement cases could be quite useful in developing a better understanding of the conditions under which mnemonic contestation advances, or fails to advance, broader political struggles.

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CHAPTER 3: THE EMERGENCE OF RACIAL VIOLENCE MEMORY MOVEMENTS

Abstract

How do once-buried pasts become salient in the present? Scholars of collective memory have called attention to conceptions of the past as important in constituting present-day political and moral identities. However, this insight of memory studies has not yet been fully engaged with in studies of social movements, arguably among the most important entities that shape political identities. This article asks how it is that formal state and civil commemorations, and in some cases even government-sponsored redress efforts, have recently arisen around formerly “buried” past incidents of mass racial violence in the United States, while other incidents that seem quite comparable have seen either nonexistent or limited efforts at commemoration and redress. I propose that a social movement perspective on commemoration offers important insights into the development of local variation in national collective memory.

I draw on data I have gathered about all cases of white-on-black extralegal violence with more than one African American fatality in the United States between the end of Reconstruction (1877) and the supposed beginning of the Civil Rights movement (1954) that attained national news attention when they happened and have seen efforts in the past three decades aimed at commemoration or redress (n=25). I compare these mnemonically-resurgent cases to a random sample of similarly tragic incidents that have

remained buried, using logistic regression techniques to examine what factors are associated with the development of recent commemorative projects. I find support for a social movement model of commemorative resurgence that incorporates event characteristics, community capacity, and commemorative contagion in its explanation of why some buried pasts are more likely to resurge than others.

Introduction

Racially-charged killings of African Americans were all too common in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century United States. *The Encyclopedia of American Race Riots* (Rucker and Upton 2006, p. 493) describes one instance of such violence, in Slocum, Texas in 1910, as follows:

On the night of July 29, 1910, a white mob of at least 200 people drove black residents near the village of Slocum ... into a heavily wooded area and killed them.... At least eighteen black people were killed. Some of the news accounts reported the number of deaths as thirty or forty.... Tension had been building in the weeks prior to the riot. Black farmers had begun to protest the peonage system.... On the night of the riot, a black man, believed to be carrying a shotgun, was declared to be advancing [on a white man]. When he refused to surrender, a posse shot him. The rioting followed shortly thereafter. Sheriff William Black's description of the situation was later quoted widely by many major newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Atlanta Constitution*: "Men were going about and killing Negroes as fast as they could find them ... without any real cause. These Negroes have done no wrong that I could discover ... It will be difficult to find out just how many were killed ... Some will probably never be found."

Though sixteen white men were arrested in connections with the killings, and concerned African Americans implored President William Howard Taft to assist with an investigation, there is no evidence that anyone was convicted in this case. While the incident was horrific, its aftermath was little different from dozens like it, as white rioters

and lynchers usually faced few or no repercussions for anti-black violence until several decades later. A century later, the incident appears largely forgotten.

A similar, if somewhat less bloody, incident took place in Duluth, Minnesota, ten years later. The Minnesota Historical Society (n.d.) describes the 1920 incident:

It was the John Robinson Circus that brought Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie to Duluth. They and other young black men were employed by the circus ... Traveling by train, the circus was greeted by an eager crowd upon arrival in Duluth. ... In the early morning of June 15th, Duluth Police Chief John Murphy received a call ... saying six black circus workers had held [a white couple] at gunpoint and then raped Irene Tusken. Six blacks were immediately arrested by the Duluth Police and held in the Duluth city jail ... That evening a white mob estimated between 1,000 and 10,000 people gathered on Superior Street outside the police station. They met little resistance from the police, who had been ordered not to use their guns. Wielding bricks, rails, and heavy timbers, the mob forced its way into the jail, tearing down doors and breaking windows. ... After a hasty mock trial, Clayton, Jackson, and McGhie were declared guilty and taken one block to a light pole on the corner of First Street and Second Avenue East. ... The three men were beaten and then lynched....The Minnesota National Guard arrived the next morning to secure Duluth and protect the three surviving black prisoners.

Three white men were given yearlong sentences for rioting, while one surviving African American spent four years in prison for the alleged rape. No one was convicted for the lynching. While Duluth's lynching made a strong mark on African Americans, prompting some to leave the city, it remained historically invisible to a broader public until the early 1990s, when the graves of the three African American lynched were located and marked. Local activists met in 2000 to consider further commemoration. Residents formed the Clayton-Jackson-McGhie Memorial Committee and by 2003, with some government support, had erected the world's largest lynching memorial in the center of downtown. As of 2010, the group continues to hold annual remembrance activities, sponsor a scholarship competition, and engage in educational efforts around present-day racial inequality—all inspired by the desire to overcome the poisonous legacy of the lynching.

Why has Slocum's massacre—which was, after all, bloodier than Duluth's lynchings—remained unmarked and unremembered, while Duluth's killings have resurged in public attention and commemoration? An array of scholars (e.g. Howard-Hassmann and Gibney 2008; Olick 2007; Torpey 2003, 2006; Nobles 2008) have pointed to the broad global turn to traumatic pasts as an issue in present-day politics and culture, and there is no doubt that America's history of racial violence has resurged in public attention. Obvious examples of this resurgence include ongoing publicity to calls for slavery reparations (e.g. Robinson 2000), apologies by various state legislatures and the U.S. Senate for slavery and for not passing anti-lynching legislation, and a recent push by the FBI to renew investigations of civil-rights-era murders (Cunningham 2008).

But pointing out that America's racially traumatic past has resurged in general leaves the varied mnemonic fates of incidents like Duluth and Slocum's killings unexplained. Why has some past racial violence experienced "resurrection" (Jansen 2007) in collective memory, while some remains unremembered? It is tempting to focus on the characteristics of the violence itself, but there are many gruesome incidents of violence that have remained unmarked. Psychological and life-course approaches (e.g. Pennebaker and Banasik 1997) have argued that a generation's worth of distance from traumatic incidents is what enables commemorative emergence, but this claim cannot explain why commemoration of racial violence from four generations ago is now surging. World-cultural approaches (e.g. Torpey 2003) have argued that widespread pessimism in developed societies about the future is fueling a collective psychological return to righting the past, while world polity theory (e.g. Tsutsui 2006) suggests that diffusion of international human rights norms across borders explains widespread interest by states in

righting historic wrongs. These explanations, though, ignore the role of non-state actors and leave open the question of how some past rights violations, but not others, are singled out to be “righted.”

This paper builds on these prior approaches but develops a synthetic social movement approach to the study of commemoration. I argue that major factors that shape social movement emergence—the opportunities movements confront, the resources that they draw upon, and the dynamics of movement diffusion—are significant predictors of the emergence of commemoration, as well. In the following section, I develop a conceptual apparatus through which theoretical and empirical dimensions of the resurgence of buried past racial violence can be understood. I then integrate extant research on social movements and commemoration, drawing out possible explanations of the differential mobilization of efforts to commemorate past racial violence. I test these explanations through a unique data set incorporating extensive information on dozens of commemorated and uncommemorated instances of white racial terrorism between 1877 and 1954. I find that while characteristics of the incidents themselves and their immediate construction in the national media account for more than a third of the story, supportive community contexts and the absence of racial oppression play a part as well. Further, I find that projects marking violence against African Americans during the 1877-1954 period help generate additional, similar projects. I close by arguing that the social movement perspective on commemoration developed here holds important promise for scholars of movements, collective memory, and redress.

American Racial Violence and Memory Movements

America's racially violent past is a central issue in present day racial politics, as ongoing debates about affirmative action and reparations make patently clear. While much scholarship has addressed racial violence and the struggles by African Americans and their allies for justice during the 1950s and 1960s in the United States (e.g. Morris 1984; McAdam 1982; Robnett 1997) as well as (to a lesser extent) the ongoing legacy of that era as a battlefield for present-day cultural and mnemonic struggle (e.g. Schwartz 2009; Polletta 1998; Flacks 1988), the long period stretching from the end of Reconstruction up to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision remains an era that has not to date received the attention it deserves from scholars or the public.

Table 3.1, below, identifies those incidents from 1877 (the date most commonly marked as the end of Reconstruction) to 1954 which have resurged in the form of various kinds of memory projects in the past few decades.¹⁶ (I discuss the sources from which Tables 3.1 and 3.2 were compiled below.) Table 3.1 identifies all the incidents that have seen public mnemonic resurrection in the last three decades, subject to a few limitations discussed below. These projects have largely occurred since the 1980's in the Southern

¹⁶ Both the tables and my consideration of memory movements around past racial violence exclude some closely related phenomena that are beyond the scope of this paper. First, I limit my analysis in this paper to incidents that occurred after 1877, largely because the number of prior incidents of racial violence that have resurged in collective memory is trivial—perhaps because incidents before 1877 have been outside collective memory so long that they exert less pull than more recent incidents, and also perhaps because racial violence prior to that date was so commonplace as to not be considered noteworthy in the first place. Second, my analysis does not address memory projects around general patterns of racial violence or racial injustice. For instance, projects designed to publicize or create records of early Twentieth Century segregation in general are not included, because a large part of my interest is in why some incidents rather than others resurge. Third, my focus is on violence, rather than heroism or stories of triumph. While commemoration of glorious pasts has been extensively studied and was central to Durkheim's (1995) foundational theory of commemoration, recent decades have seen a surge of apologies and efforts to deal with inglorious pasts (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991); this paper solely considers the marking of negative events. Finally, I exclude incidents that occurred during what might be called the "short" civil rights movement (Hall 2005) of 1954 to 1968 from my analysis, for reasons I detail below.

and Midwestern United States, have addressed incidents both large and small, and have taken a wide variety of forms.

Table 3.1 about here

Though Table 3.1 identifies many instances of resurgence, the most common mnemonic outcome is silence, or the absence of a memory project (Rivera 2008). As Tables 3.1 and 3.2 together show, of even those incidents of mass racial violence from 1877 to 1954 in which *ten or more* African Americans were reportedly killed, fewer than half have seen any type of memory project in the last several decades, though there has been increased academic interest in several more. Considering that over three thousand lynchings have been documented in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries in 10 Southern states alone (Tolnay and Beck 1991), and that many lynchings and racial killings likely went unreported, the fraction of incidents of racial violence from this era that have become objects of memory projects appears extremely small—perhaps in the realm of one percent.

Table 3.2 about here

Nevertheless, the memory projects that have arisen have taken an impressive array of forms. Most prominent, perhaps, is the mnemonic resurrection of Florida's 1923 Rosewood massacre, a white rampage that killed several to dozens of African Americans and left an African American town empty and in ruins. Though the incident was documented in national newspapers when it occurred, it afterwards entirely faded from public attention until 1982, when a reporter who stumbled onto the story unleashed a flurry of national media attention and a state investigation. Survivors of the incident

were interviewed on national television and the Florida legislature in 1994 passed legislation giving financial compensation to the survivors and their descendants. The incident was also memorialized in a host of other ways, including a 1997 Hollywood movie (D'Orso 1996; Dye 1997).

Several more of the incidents have yielded prominent government-sponsored commissions. Others have seen civil memory projects, including demands for reparations or apologies, the building of monuments and placing of plaques, graveyard cleanup projects, educational fora, efforts to change school curricula to educate students about incidents of racial violence, scholarship programs in honor of those killed in violent incidents, and more. Many of the cases have been memorialized in plays, documentary movies, or television programs; some cases have also seen a resurgence of academic attention. Government responses in addition to those previously cited have included apologies, proclamations of regret, and financial assistance to commemorative projects.

What clues does prior scholarship offer us in understanding these efforts? While some academic work (e.g. Halbwachs 1992; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991) has addressed the creation of memory projects (Irwin-Zarecka 1994) such as these efforts by institutional and movement actors, several noteworthy gaps remain. First, research on the origins of memory projects remains theoretically underdeveloped due to the absence of a dialogue with relevant literatures, particularly social movement theory, and a near-exclusive emphasis on single case studies but a dearth of comparative analyses or more general theory-building. Second, there has been no specific consideration of memory projects around past racial violence in the United States, in either their rise or effects. This oversight is significant, both because such violence was of crucial import in creating

and maintaining white supremacy and because America's racially troubled past is a topic addressed by memory projects and memory movements with increasing frequency. Finally, the vast majority of scholarship has addressed national-level commemoration, and some scholarship has addressed small-scale or local commemoration, but there has been almost no attention paid to local variation *within* broader national commemorative movements (for an important exception, see Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

Bringing old memories back is not a tactic confined to any one set of actors, and to the extent that memory has come to be held in ever-higher esteem, as Winter (2001) argues, the role that memory plays in political contestation and movements is likely to become more pronounced. Flacks (1988) was correct to argue that social movements "make history," but this history-making process should be understood in its double meaning: movements change the course of events, but they can also intervene after events have taken place to draw attention to the past, contest dominant interpretations, challenge "forgettings," and use history as a tool for empowerment and action. In the following section, I mine the extant literature in relevant fields in order to better flesh out potential explanations of the return of buried racial violence.

The Resurgence of Buried Pasts: Why some, but not others?

Collective memory refers to socially patterned understandings of the past and its meaning, but also to society-wide celebrations of anniversaries and holidays, the building of monuments to events or figures, and other objectifications and re-enactments of a real or imagined past. Scholars of collective memory emphasize that individual understandings of the past are social in origin (Olick and Robbins 1998): people "remember" and assign meaning to events that are considered important in the societies

they live in or within the groups they are part of, whether or not they personally experienced these events (Zerubavel 1997). The process through which some memories are kept in play, while others are forgotten, has an inescapably moral element: collective memory operates to instill a sense of group identity through imparting lessons deemed significant to group membership.

For decades, collective memory researchers focused on commemoration as glorification. (e.g. Durkheim 1995, in Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991: 379). The past two decades of memory scholarship, though, have turned to the commemoration of events that could hardly be considered glorious. Past events that involve defeat, that conjure up shame and regret, and that give rise to conflicting rather than unifying sentiments have become objects of commemoration (Olick 1999, Torpey 2003, 2006).

Schwartz (2000:10) writes:

Negative commemoration, the marking of events weighing on the present generation as sources of shame and dishonor, has arisen during the twentieth century in connection with society's recognition of minorities and expression of regret for the historical wrongs these groups have suffered. Subsumed under the new commemorative politics of regret are new shrines, monuments, and museums marking the era of slavery, maltreatment of minorities, and unpopular war.

Recently some scholars focused on the history of race and racism in the United States have suggested that collective memories of America's racial past emerge and are shaped through struggles between competing actors (Irwin-Zarecka 1994). For example, Blight (2001) has argued that the formation of a national memory of the civil war in the decades during and after Reconstruction was shaped by conflicts between those who wanted the war remembered as motivated by racism and slavery, and those who wanted it remembered as merely an unfortunate separation between "brothers" – two halves of a

union that should never have been divided. Binder's (2002) study of efforts by proponents of Afro-centrism and creationism to reshape school curricula and Brundage's (2005) study of efforts in African-American schools to teach an empowering version of African-American history further focused on processes of contestation shaping the development of collective memory around race in the United States.

In addition to collective memory studies, social movement studies is a field from which we might draw some guidance as to what sorts of past events become candidates for present-day mobilization around commemoration and what effects these commemorations have. Though movement studies has traditionally focused on movements seeking tangible political goals such as economic concessions, political and legal rights, and the like, the last two decades of scholarship in movement studies have expanded its focus to include more cultural outcomes such as shared identity, the promotion of alternative lifestyles, and the invigoration of other movements. Further, movements scholars have called attention to the role of collective identity and cultural processes in shaping the courses movements take (Polletta and Jasper 2001). The groundwork for my effort to draw on movement and memory concepts in explaining resurgence of buried violence has been laid by the past generation of movement studies.

Prior research in memory and movement studies points to a very wide array of factors that might shape why some events or figures are remembered (or resurge in memory) while others are not. However, little work has considered the relative importance of the many factors that analysts have pointed to as relevant, and even less has considered interrelationships between different forces shaping commemoration. In an insider's critique of the field, Olick (1995: 748-9) maintained that "if there were ever a

field overrun by unconnected case studies and in desperate need of theory and synthesis, it is social studies of memory.” Nearly all studies of the commemorative processes around negative events have been based on single-case studies (e.g. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991, Scott 1996, Kohn 1995, Bodemann 1996, Rivera 2008, Schudson 1992, Schwartz, Zerubavel, and Barnett 1986). While these studies have been valuable in identifying different concepts worth considering as relevant factors in memory-making, the methodological approach they have taken has limited their potential either for generalization or for comparative assessments of the relative importance of the many different factors that analysts have considered. Armstrong and Cragg (2006), in one of this field’s few comparative studies, suggest as much when they write that “future research investigating puzzling variation in commemorative outcomes might provide additional insights into the relative importance of commemorability, mnemonic capacity, and the properties of events. For example, scholars might investigate why some cases of genocide in the twentieth century are more commemorated than others” (745).

In this paper, I organize the manifold of concepts that prior research has suggested might shape differential mobilization of buried collective memories in the form of redress or commemoration projects into several relevant clusters. In line with social movement theories suggesting the importance of “opportunity structures” (e.g. Meyer 2004), the first two clusters concern movement-external factors that constrain and enable the emergence of commemoration. One set of concepts concerns the *characteristics of initial incidents themselves*—sometimes along with their immediate “impact” or socially assigned significance—in explaining their later commemoration or resurgence. The second set of concepts concern the broad present-day *cultural and political context* in which memory

resurgence (or continued internment) takes place. Third, prior research in line with social movement studies' resource mobilization perspective (e.g. McCarthy and Zald 1977) suggests that organizational and other *characteristics of groups seeking change* may affect the mobilization of movement projects. Finally, *ecological* theories of organizations and movements (e.g. Minkoff 1997) suggest that collective memory might fruitfully be understood relationally. I flesh out each of these categories below.

Event characteristics

The first two clusters—event characteristics and commemorative context—closely parallel social movement studies' long-time emphasis on “political opportunities” or “political opportunity structures” (Tarrow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) or “discursive opportunity structures” (Ferree, Gamson, and Gerhards 2002). Most social movement research on opportunities argues that their presence provides fertile ground for movement mobilization. Similarly, in the realm of memory, event characteristics and commemorative context are features of the cultural, political, and mnemonic environment external to present-day potential commemorators that may be decisive in shaping memories of past traumatic events.

Like scholars (e.g. Schwartz 2000) who have suggested that intrinsic qualities of past figures shape how they are commemorated, some research argues that actual event characteristics matter in how traumatic events are remembered. According to this line of reasoning, collective memory may be constructed, but it is not constructed out of whole cloth. Griffin and Bollen (2009) argue that to make a mark on collective memory, “past events must be understood in a generally consensual way [immediately after they occur],

lest individuals lack the social cues and support needed to elicit the memory, understand its import, and ultimately to act on it.” Events with greater impacts on more people are likely easier to remember consensually. Studies by Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), Spillman (1998), Pennebaker and Banasik (1997), Schuman and Rieger (1992), and Armstrong and Cragge (2006) all hint that events that affect more people and impose lasting changes may be naturally better candidates for remembrance. It seems quite plausible that events such as wars, genocides, and the like may be naturally better for commemoration than mundane everyday happenings. Events which are large and unusual, while not always remembered, often are.

The commemorative resurgence of an event might also be shaped inertially by attention it drew when or after it happened, through a process of path dependence. Numerous studies (e.g. Blight 2001, Jansen 2007, Saito 2006, Novick 2000, Schudson 1989) point to the importance of inertia: once an event has been marked as important in a particular way, future commemoration becomes easier, while alternative interpretations become more difficult to maintain. This is both because prior marking serves as a psychological signal that a past event is worth commemorating and because an initial process of commemoration sets into motion institutionalization in the form of appropriation of time and resources. Attributions of significance at the time an incident occurs might play a role in its later resurgence, with prior attention as a cue of importance.

The contexts of commemoration

Commemorative context is the second of two relevant aspects of an incident's mnemonic opportunity structure, and the second of the four clusters. While some research on the contexts of commemoration has addressed long-term, stable opportunity structures believed to be more or less constant across entire societies (e.g. Novick 2000), social movement scholars have looked at variation in political contexts as a factor explaining why movements emerge in some places but not others. For example, the 1950s-1960s civil rights movement arose in the newly urbanized South more rapidly than in the still-rural parts of the South because high concentrations of African Americans with some economic independence from whites offered politically supportive contexts not available in more rural areas (McAdam 1982). Similarly, because commemorative movements unfold in particular places, local variation in social environments may be influential in shaping commemorative movement emergence. Contextual factors that might affect mnemonic mobilization could include a location's economic conditions, distribution of political beliefs, average education levels, concentration of civic organizations, and similar factors.

Commemorators' Characteristics

Favorable contexts and remarkable past events may not be enough for commemorative movements to arise and to attain their goals. Characteristics of commemorators and the organizations that they work through might matter as well. Scholarship in social movement studies has called attention to the ways that social movement organizations vary in their capability to attract sponsorship from elites

(McCarthy and Zald 1978, Jenkins and Perrow 1977) and their members as well as in their formality (Piven and Cloward 1977), their institutionalization (Staggenborg 1988), the backgrounds, capabilities, and motivations of their leaders (Ganz 2000), and their methods (Gamson 1975), and has suggested that these factors may influence their capacity to mobilize dissent and get results. Analogously, some studies of collective memory have called attention to the characteristics of those engaging in commemoration as an important influence on whether and how traumatic events from the past are brought into the present.

In its most basic version, the claim that characteristics of commemorators matter is a claim about *resources*. Like earlier social movement scholarship in the resource mobilization tradition, this line of argument holds that would-be commemorators will be successful in achieving commemoration and disseminating memory to the extent that they or their allies command economic and political power. While early formulations of social movement resource mobilization theory suggested that movements definitionally lack resources of their own and have to depend on elite sponsors, other work growing out of this tradition (e.g. McAdam 1982) has argued that movements may be able to draw enough resources from their participants to mobilize without external support.

Several scholars have extended the concept of resources to the realm of collective memory. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Fine (1996) have argued that resources play a role in what features of the past become known. Novick (2000) argues that “the Holocaust” did not exist as a concept until the 1960s, and suggests that “it was American Jews’ wealth and political influence that made it possible for them to bring to the Mall in Washington a monument to their weakness and vulnerability. Those who remained weak

and vulnerable—who were oppressed here rather than there—lacked the wherewithal to carry off such a venture” (195). Other research has developed the concept of resources in further memory-specific directions. Armstrong and Crag (2006) discuss the “mnemonic capacity” of groups that might commemorate past events, suggesting that the concept is closely related to resources and is “shaped by political, organizational, and cultural opportunities.”

Because most social movements involve conflict, it is also important to consider the characteristics of those opposed to a project’s activities. Variation in the existence and strength of countermovements (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996) might help explain why some memory projects take root and others do not. In some cases of mnemonic struggle, countermovements proffering alternative interpretations of the past might exist; in other cases, these opposing groups might be less concerned with memory, yet highly oppositional to a community that seeks to transform memory. For example, hate groups such as the Klan may have little particular concern with memory projects launched by racial minority groups, yet still threaten the ability of minority groups to carry out such projects by diverting their energy and attention toward struggles other than mnemonic ones.

Diffusion of commemoration

Finally, some constraints on what present actors can do with the past do not concern the “inherent” characteristics of past events, but rather the relationship of these events to other memories. Commemoration efforts may be shaped by the presence or absence of similar commemoration. Meyer and Minkoff (2004) suggest that short-term

“signals” can provide openings for movements to mobilize; analogously, mnemonic signals may provide memory entrepreneurs hooks to which they can attach their projects. For example, Novick (2000) points to the release of Hannah Arendt’s book on Holocaust perpetrators as one spark for the development of widespread Holocaust memory. The marking of a single racial atrocity as significant might fuel further efforts to mark other incidents, in several different ways. First, commemoration of one event may be a way people become aware of similar events; commemoration of a lynching in one’s own area might feature mentions of other nearby lynchings, or ignite curiosity to investigate whether there were others. Such commemoration may also be a psychological signal that triggers a desire in those who know of similar events to demand recognition of them. As commemoration becomes more common, networks among those with knowledge of racial violence and experience in commemorative efforts might diffuse, facilitating further projects.

However, the diffusion hypothesis is challenged by the potential for a contrary effect. Commemoration may be blocked or cut short because of a perceived lack of novelty (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). Schwartz’s (2009) study of the “apotheosis” of Rosa Parks argues that other figures who might have been credited as sparking the civil rights movement have been written out of collective memory in large part because of the rise of Parks’ star. Schwartz argues that humans’ “channel capacity”—or the amount of information people can reasonably cope with—is limited, and that in order for complex events to be retained, they must be simplified into icons like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. Schwartz posits a “Matthew effect” in which those figures who receive early credit for the accomplishments of many will become “summarizing symbols” who

crowd out others from collective memory, subjecting them to a “shadow effect.” While Schwartz’s study is about reputations, the same principle might be carried over to commemoration of events; for example, Armstrong and Cragé’s (2006) study of the gay liberation movement’s commemorative activity suggests that events credited as “beginnings” can crowd out other, similar events from collective memory. I consider all these possibilities.¹⁷

Methods and measures

Population and sampling strategy

Factors prior researchers have identified as potentially important influences on whether buried traumatic pasts are revived include the characteristics of past events themselves and their short-term impact, present-day community contexts, commemorative group characteristics (and characteristics of potential opponents), and the interrelationships between different sets of marked events. In the remainder of the paper, I use a data set I compiled, consisting of information about 75 incidents of violence and their commemoration (n=25) or non-commemoration (n=50), to develop the first fully comparative analysis of the resurgence of buried pasts.

My population of interest—that is, those incidents “at risk” for recent commemorative activity—is all instances of extralegal white-on-black violence in the United States between 1877 and 1954 in which at least one African American is believed

¹⁷ Social movement scholars have often considered framing (Benford and Snow 2000) as another important influence on movement emergence. Because this paper counts any high-impact civil activity or government action as indicating movement emergence, there are no cases in this paper where framing has occurred without movement emergence. Variation in framing may make a difference in commemorative movement *success*, but among this set of movements, by definition, it does not influence emergence since it only occurs among movements that have already emerged.

to have been killed.^{18,19} Based on three years of immersion in the topic area and dozens of interviews and discussions with commemorative activists, I identified every instance from my population of interest which has seen commemorative activity in the past three decades. The total number of positive cases was 25. (I describe my criteria for what constitutes commemoration below. For methodological details, see Appendix 1.)

I then constituted a list of all incidents “at risk” for commemoration that made the national newspapers by using the ProQuest Historical and Black Studies Center databases to search for every article in five national newspapers between 1877 and 1954 that featured the words “race riot,” “lynching,” or “lynched” in its headline or abstract. This yielded about 15,000 articles, though the vast majority of articles were not about a

¹⁸ This definition includes lynchings as defined by the NAACP in their influential definition of the practice (NAACP 1919), as well as incidents not technically considered lynchings because they had fewer than three perpetrators. It also includes many of the incidents termed “race riots” that took place during this period, but does not include any legal executions. Though there are commemorations of extralegal incidents of white-on-black violence between 1877 and 1954 in which no deaths occurred and of past legal executions, such commemorations are very rare. I identified one (arguably two) deathless racial expulsions which have seen some recent commemorative activity beyond simply being written about (Pierce City, MO in 1901 and arguably Corbin, KY in 1919), and two legal executions (Lena Baker in Florida in 1944 and John Snowden in Maryland in 1919) which have spurred recent commemorative activity. Though such activities are interesting, there is no clear way to develop a well-defined population of expulsions (because they were reported in the news using a wide array of different terms, because many were unreported in the national press, and because lists of known expulsions have enormous geographical biases) or a population of unjust legal executions of black Americans. Overall, little would be gained from the great deal of effort it would require to constitute two additional separate populations merely to add three positive instances of commemoration.

¹⁹ The years covered in the study offer a population of anti-black atrocities recent enough that memory-activists might be concerned with them—the events are not “ancient history”—but old enough that the incidents’ relevance to present-day racial justice efforts is not self-evident. The first year marks the end of the Reconstruction era and the beginning of a long era of particularly intense legal and extralegal white-on-black violence. The closing year marks the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, quickly followed by Montgomery’s bus boycott and the black freedom movement’s rise to national prominence. Because the post-1954 phase of the movement and its martyrs have been so extensively packaged as “the civil rights movement” and have been extensively commemorated as the embodiment of creedal America (Hall 2005), and much of its violence was marked immediately in American collective memory, I expect that commemoration of racial violence beginning in 1954 may be subject to different causal processes than commemoration of events prior.

specific incident of violence and many incidents yielded multiple articles.²⁰ Excluding the commemorated cases from this list of at-risk incidents, I drew a random sample of 50 uncommemorated incidents, weighting the cases to adjust for the unequal probabilities of selection that stem from the fact that incidents that generated more national news coverage were more likely to enter the sample. All analyses presented reflect the use of this weighted data set.

Measuring Memorialization

Through news searches, telephone interviews, email communication, Internet searches, and secondary sources, I collected information on how much and what kinds of commemorative activity each incident has seen. In the broader project, I measured 18 different commemorative outcomes, falling into five clusters. I concern myself with two clusters in this chapter. First, I considered whether any *government entity* has issued an apology or statement of regret for an incident, provided funding for any commemorative activity, sponsored a commission aimed at investigating or publicizing the incident, or participated in any other kind of commemorative activity. While government action is

²⁰ After constituting a population on the grounds described above, I discovered that the term “race riot” was not used by the papers I had available until 1886, suggesting that I might have missed relevant incidents of mass violence that were described as “massacres” or “riots” (without the prefatory word “race”) and that this issue might be systematically associated with the year an incident occurred. To address this, I searched the primary database of four newspapers for articles whose abstract or headline used the term “riot” or “massacre” or “slaughter” within three words of at least one of the terms “black,” “negro,” or “negroes.” The Black Studies Center database did not offer a “within three words” option, so I searched in The Chicago Defender for articles whose abstract or headline used the term “riot” or “massacre” or “slaughter” along with at least one of the terms “black,” “negro,” or “negroes.” In both databases, I used the “and not” feature to exclude any articles using the words “race riot,” “lynched,” or lynching” in the headline or abstract, which would have been redundant with my initial search process. These searches yielded 420 new articles. Consistent with my sampling strategy described in the appendix, I drew seven (1/60th) of them at random. Only one of the seven pieces was about a specific incident in which at least one African American died; I added this article into my sample of 104 stories described in the appendix.

not a necessary component of commemoration, scholarship in social movements and cultural sociology takes state action quite seriously, as few organized actors carry the legitimacy, power, reach, and resources of the state. Since memory movements by definition seek publicity and legitimacy, other things equal, state action that recognizes their claims is a very desirable outcome. Second, I considered *high-impact civil action*. Here I included the formation of a formal group specifically dedicated to commemoration or redress of an incident, sustained activity over a number of years around commemoration whether by a group or an individual, a memorial ceremony or march aimed at commemoration, the creation of scholarships as a part of commemoration, the extent of information available online about commemorative activities, and the building of a permanent memorial. My dependent variable is a binary term that measures whether or not substantial commemorative activity has emerged. If an incident attained any of the markers of government activity or of the high-impact kinds of civil activity described above, it scored a “1” on this outcome; all other cases scored zero.

My emphasis on the two types of activity meshes closely with my interviewees’ sense of what constituted “real” commemoration: several—including one who has written a major academic work on the topic (Loewen 2005)—were insistent that academic “memorialization” in the form of books or of documentaries does not constitute commemoration, because the reach of such projects is too limited.²¹ While one could define commemoration in various ways, only four of the 92 total cases I evaluated in the broader project posed any difficulty in classification using my scheme. The enacted

²¹ Similarly, when the commemorative activists I spoke with discussed different projects, they never discussed incidents that had only spawned academic or media attention as constituting commemorative endeavors at all.

forms of commemoration cluster heavily together, such that nearly all the cases that have seen “major” types of commemoration have seen a great deal of lower-impact commemoration, and vice versa.²²

Measuring Incident and Incident Aftermath Predictors

Consistent with my earlier grouping of potentially relevant explanatory factors into four conceptual sets, I first explain my operationalization of concepts involving incident characteristics, incident context, and immediate aftermath, and then move through each successive cluster. More extended descriptions of measurement can be found in Appendix 2. First, I measured reported fatalities, taking into account both the confirmed fatalities figures and the estimated fatalities figures. Because scholars have argued that the past tends to fade from the “living” status of collective memory to the “dead” status of history as it becomes more distant (Halbwachs 1992), events that are older may be less viable candidates for commemoration because they are less accessible and salient to those alive today (Jansen 2007). I therefore measured the years passed since each event. I also consider a measure of the rareness of racial violence in each state—the state’s total number of lynchings of African Americans as reported by the Tuskegee Institute’s lynching data, divided by the state’s population in 1900—on the

²² In two cases (New Orleans’ 1900 riot and Detroit’s 1943 riot) the only form of non-academic commemoration was the recent making of a play that addressed the topic; in another (Thibodaux, Louisiana’s 1887 massacre), a recent action movie that went straight to DVD and only loosely used the incident in its story was the only form that memorialization took. Chicago’s 1919 riot was recently the subject of a demand for an official investigation, but the demand was not made by an organized group and was made in the context of a demand for investigation of two other riots in Illinois. Strikingly, all four cases of token or marginal commemoration are extremely bloody incidents in which a dozen to over a hundred people were killed, suggesting that large incidents might be especially likely to receive token commemoration. However, in accordance with my and my interviewees’ view that no memory movement mobilization has taken place in these cases, they are treated as non-commemorations in the analyses presented here.

grounds that racial violence might be regarded as more commemorable where it was rarer.²³ Moral valences of victims might also affect the likelihood of mnemonic resurrection, with those constructed early on as fully innocent victims of mob injustice more likely to be memorialized than lynching or riot victims who were widely considered guilty of a serious crime. I therefore include a binary variable that marks whether the major national media regarded one or more of the victims of violence to be innocent of a serious crime, as shown in their coverage of and after the incident (see Appendix 2). Finally, I measured national media attention that each incident received at the time it occurred and for the following two years by counting the number of major media stories about the incident during that period. This measure provides an estimate of the impact or ascribed level of drama of an incident.

Present-Day Context

I additionally consider several aspects of the broad opportunity structure of an area. First, I consider the population size of each county, as commemorators themselves as well as the resources they bring can aid memorialization. Cities with more people have more resources upon which to draw for commemoration, more outlets and venues for commemorative projects, and so on. These data are from the most recent available full Census figures (2000). I also consider driving time between each location and the nearest

²³ The Tuskegee data have been criticized for inaccuracies in individual cases (e.g. Tolnay and Beck 1991), but on an aggregate state level, its figures are very close to Tolnay and Beck's more highly regarded data, with only one state (Kentucky) deviating by more than 10%. Because Tolnay and Beck's data only covers ten states, I use the Tuskegee data.

city with 100,000 or more inhabitants (as of 2000). I use Google Maps to calculate driving times.²⁴

An area's educational attainment is a second broad contextual factor I expect to shape the emergence of commemorative projects. Highly educated communities might be more likely to be concerned with history and commemoration: well-educated communities likely have more potential commemorative activists and receptive audiences than less-educated locations. I use high school completion rates in my analysis. I also consider whether an area's economic well-being may affect commemorative projects. Specifically in this context, it may be that memorial or redress projects are less likely in contexts where present economic problems seem more pressing. I use Census data to measure median household income in each county.

Commemorators' Characteristics

A third set of relevant factors concerns the characteristics of the social groups from which the figures being commemorated are drawn. I consider various measures of African American political, cultural, and economic strength and organization. First, I include a measure of the percent of a county's population made up of African Americans. Percent black is an enormous influence on a location's likelihood of electing black leaders, as well as an important measure in its own right of potential African American influence in political and social affairs. I also test measures of the percent of blacks

²⁴ As a measure of an area's organizational capacity, I collected a measure of the total number of nonprofit social action organizations (Category R) per county from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS). However, in the set of counties considered here, number of organizations was nearly perfectly correlated with county population ($r > .95$); I therefore exclude it from analyses.

holding a high school degree and of black household income, both of which are potential indicators of African American cultural and economic power.²⁵

As a measure of racial oppression that may speak to debates about countermovements and repression, I measure the number of anti-African American or general hate groups per county per capita, using data from the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d, viewed 2009.). While underreporting may be a concern here, the measure captures at least those organizations that are large or active enough to gain the notice of the nation's primary monitor of such organizations. Hate groups are an indicator of serious and organized white antipathy against African Americans that may not be captured by terms measuring economic or educational inequality.

Commemorative competition and signaling effects

A fourth cluster of factors concerns the relationship between different commemorations. Since commemorations might very well affect other commemorations, I measure the connections between different types of memorializations in several ways. I evaluate terms measuring both the number of *prior* commemorative efforts around 1877-1954 racial violence within an hour of each county and the number of *all other* (prior and later) commemorative efforts around 1877-1954 racial violence within an hour of each county. Because states are an important unit of social organization that may shape the formation of networks as well, I also replicate these terms using the number of 1877-1954 memorial projects within the same state (per million people).

²⁵ I examined a measure of a county's race-related civil rights organizations (Categories R20, R22, and R30) drawn from the National Center for Charitable Statistics, but this measure was correlated above .9 with a county's black population; I omit it from analyses.

Results

I consider the effects of each cluster of factors separately before moving to synthetic models. Table 3.3 presents the results from a set of logistic regressions using only factors related to the incidents themselves and their immediate constructions or impacts as predictors of later commemorative resurgence. In this and all other tables except where noted, the outcome is a dichotomous term which gives 25 incidents scores of 1 (and 50 incidents scores of 0) based on whether the incidents have seen any government action and/or substantial civic action, or not. Cases are weighted (with actual sample size always 75 cases) to reflect sampling probabilities, and I present the results as odds ratios. The first column of the table reveals significant bivariate relationships in the expected direction for all theoretically relevant incident characteristics—for example, an incident with two deaths rather than one death is 1.24 times more likely to be resurrected in commemoration; an incident with an innocent victim is nearly seven times more likely to resurge than an incident lacking such a morally compelling victim, and so on. Model A1 shows that the three factors that are most directly about an incident itself and its context (rather than how it was constructed after it occurred)—its death toll, distance in the past, and rareness given its state’s propensity to lynch African Americans—remain important predictors when modeled together. Models A2, A3, and A4 add in variables concerning immediate interpretations given to an incident. In these models, the extent of national news coverage an incident attained when it occurred and perceptions immediately afterward about innocence appear to eliminate the statistical significance of the death toll and years ago terms. This is likely because news coverage was partly a

function of both an incident's number of deaths and its distance in the past, with lynchings drawing more stories as they became less frequent, and more violent incidents drawing more attention. Model A5 shows an alternate way of modeling the mundanity of lynching, where incidents in the ten states with the greatest number of lynchings are modeled against all other states. In this model the number of deaths in an incident remains predictive of its later commemorative resurrection, at a borderline significant level; however, this model is constrained in its measurement of rareness of past racial violence and is presented only for illustrative purposes. In the aggregate, these models suggest that just over a third of the variation in recent commemorative resurgence of buried violence can be explained on the basis of characteristics of the incidents themselves and their immediate aftermaths.²⁶

Table 3.3 about here

Before moving onward to consideration of present-day factors that might shape mnemonic resurgence, an interesting consideration is why some racially charged killings attained more newspaper attention when they occurred. Table 4 presents an ordinary least squares model of the number of stories published in the three white and two African American major national newspapers used in this project. By far the strongest effect is for the number of deaths, with bloodier incidents drawing more newspaper coverage when they occurred. Distance in the past is also an influence on news attention, unsurprisingly so considering that national news wire services were developed during the era of interest, that two of the newspapers of interest were founded during this period, and that lynching

²⁶ The Wald chi-square statistics are tests against a null model, not of the models against each other.

was becoming more and more remarkable as time passed. The rareness of lynching in the state that each incident was located in is a borderline significant predictor of newspaper attention ($p=.07$). Incidents in states with one of the five national newspapers appear no more likely to gain more news attention than incidents in states without a national paper; this non-effect held when I tested a term indicating whether the incident was within one hour in current driving time from one of the five newspapers (not shown here).²⁷ Finally, whether the victims of racial violence were regarded as innocent of crimes was not predictive of newspaper attention. While this factor was significant in its bivariate relationship with coverage, inclusion of the number of deaths term attenuated its impact to nonsignificance. Incidents with very large numbers of fatalities, of course, nearly always had at least one victim who was not regarded as guilty of any particular crime.

Table 3.4 about here

I now turn to present-day factors shaping commemorative resurgence. Table 3.5 considers general contextual factors that might affect the emergence of efforts to rekindle memories of buried violence. The first column shows that each of the contextual factors considered, without any controls, significantly affects the likelihood of commemorative resurgence in the expected direction. Most striking is the effect of a county's education levels: counties with higher proportions of high school and college-educated residents are more likely to have initiated commemorative efforts than less-educated places. Model C1, which draws the predictors together into a single model, shows that some of the

²⁷ While this finding is interesting, it must also be taken with a grain of salt, as it is possible that many lynchings that took place in distant rural areas, especially in the Deep South, simply never were recorded in any newspaper (Loewen 2009). A full accounting of all lynchings—even those that never were recorded—might well find significant effects of proximity to a newspaper on coverage.

factors suggested by social movement theories—specifically, those concerning resources in the forms of money and people—have no impact on commemoration, except through facilitating greater access to education. While I include logged county population and not raw population or organizations in Model C1 (due to theoretical overlap and the high correlation referenced above), inclusion of either education term with either of those two terms or any other of the terms in this cluster reduces each of those other terms to nonsignificance (not shown). As the college and high school education terms are highly correlated and yield functionally identical results, I include only the high school term in Model C1. Overall, the finding here is that apparent relationships between financial and human resources and commemoration appear largely to be the effect of education: well-resourced communities are no more likely than poor, sparsely populated communities to commemorate, except to the extent that they have more well-educated citizens.

Table 3.5 about here

I turn now to the third of the clusters, which concerns characteristics of African American communities in each location—their economic, political, and organizational power, along with the intensity of the opposition they might face. As the bivariate relationships column in Table 3.6 shows, communities that are more African American commemorate *less*—a one percent increase in the share of a county’s population that is black yields a five percent decrease in its likelihood of commemoration. This bivariate relationship is counterintuitive, as one would expect counties with more African Americans to see greater emphasis on commemoration of black history. However, moving through models D1 and D2 reveals that this relationship fades to nonsignificance

when relevant controls are brought in. In particular, Model D2 incorporates a measure of hate group activity per county and shows hate groups to be a strong negative influence on commemoration. Graphing percent African American against hate groups per million people (not shown) reveals that counties with a higher share of African Americans in the population are sites of more hate group activity, at least within the range of the data here.²⁸ Therefore, the apparent negative effect of percent African American on commemoration is likely actually an effect of repressiveness or opposition to African Americans in the form of organized hate groups. Black communities that face an existential threat in the form of hate groups may have less attention to devote to commemoration than African Americans in less hostile settings; it is also possible that the interracial cooperation that characterizes many of the memory projects is less likely to occur in a setting polarized by hate groups.

Table 3.6 about here

The final cluster of factors that might shape project emergence concerns interrelationships between different pieces of the past. Table 3.7 considers the effects of nearby commemoration of 1877-1954 violence on commemoration emergence, with controls for the extent of actual 1950s-1960s violence in each county's home state and for the commemoration of 1950s-1960s violence in that state.²⁹ Models E1 through E5

²⁸ The relationship appears to fade as percent black moves above 40 percent, perhaps indicating a dynamic similar to that found in the literature on "racial threat" in which counties with higher numbers of African Americans are more racially repressive up to a threshold at which African Americans constitute a near-majority of the population (Blalock 1967; Turk 1969; Horowitz 1985).

²⁹ The control cluster shows a strong negative statistical relationship between the extent to which a state has in the past 15 years brought legal attention to reopening and seeking to prosecute 1950s-1960s cold case murders and its commemoration of 1877-1954 violence; it also shows a similar negative relationship between less adversarial commemoration of 1950s-1960s conflict—the marking of sites by the National

measure nearby commemoration of 1877-1954 violence in several different ways, to provide a full picture of the magnitude of the relationships. Models E1 through E3 show the effect of nearby 1877-1954 violence commemoration on the likelihood that a similar incident within the same state or within a one-hour drive will be commemorated, regardless of time order. That is, these three models do not definitively show causal effects of commemoration on other commemoration so much as they suggest the existence of networks of commemoration, wherein commemoration appears in geographical clusters (net of the actual extent of racial violence). Models E4 and E5 incorporate time, statistically only allowing prior commemorations to affect later ones. While Model E4 is only borderline significant, further analysis reveals this shortfall to be an artifact of the small number of positive cases of commemoration. In the unweighted data set, while only a quarter of the 62 cases without another commemoration within an hour were commemorated, 9 of the 16 cases with nearby commemoration were sites of

Parks Service as important civil rights history locations—and 1877-1954 commemoration. In Chapter 1, I argued that these relationships can be traced largely to Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana—three key sites of numerous cold case reopenings and marking of 1950s-1960s civil rights conflict—having no commemoration of 1877-1954 incidents of violence, while Georgia and Florida, which have seen almost no cold case reopenings, have seen extensive movements toward commemoration of 1877-1954 violence. The quantitative data are not conclusive about the causal dynamics in this relationship. Some of my interviewees argued that the Deep South states’ entrenched opposition to black incorporation in the political process has spawned more adversarial strategies (of attempted re-prosecution) in those states, while Georgia’s (in particular the Atlanta area’s) white leaders’ efforts to co-opt black leadership through limited incorporation has resulted in less confrontational strategies by African American civil rights figures there. Similarly, it is possible that the marking of 1950s-1960s violence as significant, given limited resources, might represent a strategic tradeoff with a focus on earlier 1877-1954 violence. If Schwartz (2009) is correct that humans’ “channel capacity” is limited, efforts to mark certain states as key sites of 1950s-1960s struggle might heighten potential commemorators’ sense of those locations as mnemonically belonging to that era, attenuating the propensity to associate those locations with more temporally distant violence. However, given that a strong version of the tradeoffs claim would require believing that it is civil rights commemoration in the Deep South—not just higher levels of racial oppression—that has dampened the marking of older violence there (and conversely, the failure to pursue civil rights cold cases in Florida and Georgia that has allowed other commemorations to flourish there), the exact causal nature of this relationship should be a topic for more detailed qualitative investigation.

memory projects. Overall, this is suggestive of diffusion effects of prior commemoration.

Tables 3.7 and 3.8 about here

Finally, I present synthetic models drawing together the full array of sets of factors considered so far. These models appear in Table 3.8. I draw the factors included in these models from the prior analyses, excluding variables that are fully mediated by other factors and including insignificant variables from prior models only if relevant as controls. The baseline model is a naïve model in which present commemoration is solely a function of past incidents (and their immediate construction in the form of innocence attributions). The baseline model is nested within models F1 and F2, which add the education term and the hate groups term; these models show the effects of these two new terms and the incident characteristics terms to be somewhat robust. Models F3 and F4 show that including controls for state-level marking of 1950s-1960s violence (whether in prosecution or in commemoration) has little effect on the other coefficients. Finally, models F5 and F6 show that diffusion effects from nearby commemoration are significant (or borderline significant with controls) on top of baseline characteristics and the education and hate groups terms, in synthetic models. The overall picture that emerges here is therefore largely consistent with the clustered models presented above.

Conclusion

I have presented the first synthetic medium-to-large sample study that tests various concepts drawn from the social movement literature in their effects on the

resurgence of buried pasts. Further, this project is the only paper to date which examines variation in the ways that America's racially violent past is returning to present day political and cultural debates. My analysis finds support for several arguments presented by previous, case-based studies, while other claims are not supported in this context. This paper builds on Kubal's (2008) demonstration that social movement studies' political process model can be fruitful in explaining contestation over memory of Christopher Columbus, as it shows the utility of a wider set of movement studies concepts in a medium-sample context, around a set of important and largely unexplored movements. Overall, the results indicate substantial theoretical payoff from a social movements perspective on commemoration.

First, I find that movement studies' concept of opportunity structure—here modified to concern historically fixed event characteristics and present-day commemorative contexts—is fruitful in understanding mnemonic mobilization. In particular, in terms of event characteristics, I find substantial evidence that the actual past matters in shaping present-day understandings of it. While the position that the actual past is important is likely now not especially controversial in memory studies (Schudson 1989), in contrast to earlier academic views that took a very strong constructionist position (e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), I build on current understanding of this fact in two ways. First, this is the first study to quantify the extent to which actual pasts shape present remembrance on this scale. While at least a single national news story is a nearly fully necessary condition for mnemonic resurgence decades later, among the set of cases that attained national news attention when they occurred, characteristics of the incident itself, its context, and its depiction at the time explain about 40 percent of the variation in

mnemonic resurgence. The finding that less than half, but more than a third, of present variation in the resurgence of buried racial violence can be understood in terms of factors that are historically fixed helps illustrate why debates have been waged over the significance of actual pasts, as the scope of variation explained by the actual past is neither trivial nor dominating. Second, I show that nearly half of the effects of the “actual past” can be traced to immediate constructions of the past in the form of national news attention and narratives about innocence that are constructed immediately following an incident. Because very few people alive today have memories of any of the violence during my time period of interest, collective memory of these events is historically mediated to an enormous extent—in this case, by newspaper records and stories of guilt or innocence—and therefore partially path dependent (Saito 2006). This is not to say that memory entrepreneurs cannot change the valence or salience of buried historical figures or incidents (Jansen 2007); they can. However, given the enormous amount of racial violence that has transpired in American history—of which many African Americans are certainly aware, though they may lack detailed knowledge of particular incidents—stories which were preserved through external “mirrors” appear to have a substantial advantage over stories preserved only through oral traditions. Historical legitimacy in the form of formally enshrined evidence and stories of innocence appears to matter greatly.

Second, I found that broad community contextual terms have some effect on commemorative resurgence, but these effects are narrow rather than broad. A county’s education levels were the only significant factor from this cluster of variables, suggesting that to the extent that county population and economic factors matter, they do so by building a populace that contains potential mnemonic activists as well as people who are

potentially receptive to these stories. While prior research has found education to be a strong individual-level predictor of various kinds of civic activity, this is the first study to confirm a relationship between aggregate educational measures and commemorative activity. The finding also suggests that it is not merely movements whose commemorative capacities might be relevant to memorialization; rather, city-level or contextual capacities matter as well. This point might be even more the case in studies of the scope of memory movements, rather than merely their inception; for example, it seems likely that locations with more resources might be more likely to launch full-scale commission investigations of past racial violence (as Tulsa, OK, Wilmington, NC, and the state of Florida in the Rosewood case all have done) while less-resourced cities or actors can do less. Future research should test this possibility.

In terms of commemorative group characteristics, the strong negative effect of hate groups on commemorative activity is consistent with social movement theories emphasizing the ability of repression to deter challenging activity (e.g. Earl 2003). This paper is the first to find a negative relationship between groups that oppose a population broadly (e.g. hate groups' opposition to African Americans' presence, existence, and success) and the scope of commemorative activity launched by the target group. Future qualitative research might investigate whether this is because subordinate groups under pressure view history-making and maintaining as less vital than other activities, or for other reasons, and should consider why history-making *is* seen as vital in at least some oppressive contexts. The findings of insignificant effects for racial composition and measures of African American prosperity and cultural power, while in some ways surprising, are consistent with evidence from the cases that non-African Americans

played crucial roles in many of these projects. Given that simply launching a commemorative project around historic anti-black violence does not require lifelong engagement in an African American community, it appears that broad historical knowledge and interest, even if among white Americans, is sufficient to launch commemorative projects. It may also be that the costs of launching a memory project are sufficiently low that variation in African American population and prosperity are irrelevant. However, researchers should investigate the role of black community prosperity in shaping the outcomes of memory movements once launched, considering whether projects launched by African Americans or in communities where African Americans have more power and resources are more likely to attain greater success.

Finally, I found evidence of diffusion, in that the marking of 1877-1954 violence is made more likely by marking of nearby violence from that same time period. Marking 1877-1954 violence appears to serve as a signal of its importance, spurring nearby potential commemorators into action (though part of this effect is due to the same people being involved in several commemorative projects in the same area). This finding helps qualify Schwartz's (2009) thesis of a Matthew Effect in collective memory. The United States, and even single states within it, has the capacity to commemorate far more resurgent cases of buried segregation-era mass racial violence than simply the one which grabbed the limelight first (Rosewood, Florida's 1923 expulsion). Of course, individuals not involved in commemorative activity might retain memories of only one (or none) of these events; however, marking this era's violence as important fuels the memorialization of additional, similar events. Large-scale national dynamics of collective memory are therefore not directly comparable to aggregated individual "collected" memory processes,

as there exists the potential for broad local variation in national commemorative processes—a point that Schwartz’s thesis appears to under-recognize.

I have not considered every relevant dimension of the formation of efforts to rekindle buried memories of past racial violence. Further research might address not simply the launching of such projects, but explanations for the varied trajectories they take and the scale of their achievements. We might also consider whether certain kinds of incidents—such as the bloodiest ones, or those of the more recent past—are subject to different causal forces than those found here. Further, we might examine whether the analysis presented here can also explain dynamics of commemoration of the 1950s-1960s civil rights movement, or of (and during) other eras in American history. Given that violence during the civil rights era was often burned into American collective memory when it occurred, testing whether marking of that era’s violence can be explained in terms of the processes considered in this paper would be most worthwhile, and could help deepen scholarly understanding of the different forces involved in resurrecting “dead” history and transforming “living” collective memory (Halbwachs 1992, Cragge 2008). Any number of other substantive sets of cases might accomplish similar goals of theoretical refinement; we might also extend this paper’s focus on violent events to other types of memory such as that of heroes, villains, victories, and so on.

More generally, commemorative projects are only a single kind of history-making (Flacks 1988). Scholars could consider whether local variation in other forms of constructing history—such as curriculum changes, patterns of street naming, and so on—whether in the marking of African American history in the United States or in any number of other contexts—are explicable through the movement lens presented here.

Such research would be a valuable corrective to the current near-exclusive emphasis on national-level commemoration that has to date restricted scholars' understanding of our theories' scope and limitations.

Finally, scholars might turn the perspective of this paper on its head, to examine the utility of memory studies concepts for better understanding social movements. This paper, which has been centrally concerned with variation in movement emergence, has said little about the background conditions that have facilitated a broad rise in consciousness of past racial violence, and provided little detail about the internal dynamics of movements. Since (collective and individual) memory is at the core of identity, perhaps memory studies' rich historical and case-oriented perspective could complement recent efforts to more fully bring culture into movement studies (e.g. Rochon 1998, Polletta 2002) by fleshing out movement scholars' understanding of important cultural concepts like collective identity, framing, and emotions. Dialogue is a two-way street, and these two fields—which scholars have only recently begun to intersect—have much to offer each other. We should investigate not just what movement studies can offer memory studies, but also the converse, and should further consider whether dialogue between the fields can prompt intellectual breakthroughs that neither field might have attained alone.

CHAPTER 3 TABLES

Table 3.1. Mnemonic resurrection of extralegal fatal white-on-black 1877-1954 violence.

Location	State	Year	Event	Estimated Deaths	Commemoration types (not exhaustive)
Wilmington	NC	1898	Coup/ partial expulsion	75	State commission, news coverage, civil group, monument, fora, documentary, economic initiative
Newnam	GA	1899	Lynching of Sam Hose	1	Day of remembrance, scholarship program
Pierce City and Springfield	MO	1901, 1906	SW Missouri Expulsions, lynchings	3+, 3	<i>Banished</i> movie, news attention, small display, African- American Expulsion Bill, Springfield cemetery monument
Watkinsville	GA	1905	Mass lynching	7 or 8	Attempt to find graves of victims to memorialize
Atlanta	GA	1906	Riot	About 25	Civil group, books, art and theater activities
Annapolis	MD	1906	Henry Davis lynching	1	Plaque at St Johns College
Chattanooga	TN	1906	Ed Johnson lynching (only USSC criminal trial ever)	1	2000 charges dropped, 1999 book Contempt of Court, play, ceremony
Springfield	IL	1908	Riot/expulsion attempt	2 black, 5 white	Extensive, varied, official and civil, book, movie, landmarks, educational events
Forsyth County	GA	1912	Expulsion, land grab	1	<i>Banished</i> movie, news attention, 1987 march and counter-march, legal effort for redress, two commissions
Abbeville	SC	1916	Lynching and expulsion	1	Unknown; group exists but website defunct
Newberry	FL	1916	Group lynching	4+	Memorial ceremony in 2003
Waco	TX	1916	Lynching of Jesse Washington	1	Community Race Relations Coalition, city resolution
East St	IL	1917	Riot.	100 or	Annual march/ ceremony,

Louis			Expulsion attempt.	more	library event
Valdosta	GA	1918	13 lynched, partial expulsion	13	Civil group, ceremony, marker planned
Omaha	NE	1919	Riot and lynching	1	Ceremonies, play, more
Ocoee	FL	1920	Election riot, expulsion	6-60	Movie, two civil groups, park, educational activities
Duluth	MN	1920	Lynching Clayton-Jackson-McGhie	3	Large memorial, group, and more
Tulsa	OK	1921	Riot/pogrom, neighborhood destruction, partial expulsion.	75-300	Reparations demand, state commission, lawsuits, civil group
Rosewood	FL	1923	Expulsion/city destruction	8-200	1982 news article, 1994 reparations, bus tours, 1997 movie, book, replica of city planned
Price	UT	1925	Lynching	1	Day of Reconciliation, school event, gravestone dedication, all in 1998
Marion	IN	1930	Lynching	2	Day of Remembrance, apology
Live Oak*	FL	1944	Lynching	1	Efforts to re-open case, headstone, DVD
Moore's Ford	GA	1946	Lynching	4	Memorial committee, re-enactments, scholarship, FBI case
Albany	GA	1946	Maceo Snipes shot for voting	1	NAACP push for FBI investigation in 2006, 2 nd funeral in 2006
Mims	FL	1951	Moore's assassinated	2	Cultural center, statue, annual festival

Note: Sorted by year that incident took place. This table excludes Chicago's 1919 riot (the site of a TV special and a recent demand for investigation, but no actual investigation) along with riots in Thibodaux, LA (1887), New Orleans, LA (1900), and Detroit, MI (1943), all of which have seen commemoration in the form of plays or movies but nothing else. Live Oak, Florida's 1944 lynching is the single resurrected case that did not make the national papers when it occurred. Two unlisted commemorations are excluded due to data limitations at the time of writing.

Table 3.2. Uncommemorated killings with 10+ African American deaths, 1877-1954

Location	State	Year	Event
Carrollton	MS	1886	Courthouse massacre
Thibodaux	LA	1887	Labor riot/massacre
Oak Ridge	LA	1887	Riot/lynchings
Jesup	GA	1889	Riot/lynchings
Leflore County	MS	1889	Riot/lynchings
Scott County	MS	1898	Riot/lynchings
New Orleans	LA	1900	Race riot
Washington Parrish	LA	1901	Race riot/lynchings
St Charles	AR	1904	Riot/lynchings
Scooba	MS	1906	Riot/lynchings
Slocum	TX	1910	Riot/lynchings
Chicago	IL	1919	Race riot
Washington	DC	1919	Race riot
Covington	GA	1920	Debt bondage killings
Detroit	MI	1943	Race riot

Table 3.3. Incident-level predictors of commemorative resurgence. Odds ratios.

	BIVAR	Model A1	Model A2	Model A3	Model A4	Model A5
INCIDENT AND CONTEXT						
Number of deaths	1.24***	1.24*	1.12	1.19**	1.07	1.15^
# of years ago	.96*	.96*	0.98	0.98	1.00	
State lynchings per 100k Af Ams	1.02*	1.02*	1.03*	1.03**	1.03**	
In Deep South state? (binary)	.14***					.20*
IMMEDIATE RESPONSE						
# nat'l news stories at time	1.09**		1.08*		1.09*	1.06*
At least one victim marked as innocent	6.86**			3.95^	6.43**	3.80*
Wald Chi 2 (p)	NA	17.96***	19.00***	23.09***	19.01**	13.47**
Pseudo R2	NA	.31	.40	.34	.44	.40

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Table 3.4. Predictors of news attention at the time.

	Model B1
Number of deaths	.66 (.07)***
# of years ago	-.12 (.06)*
In state with national newspaper	-.61 (1.3)
State lynchings per 100k people	-.11 (.06) ^
Reputed innocence	-.65 (.97)
Global F test	17.94***
R2	.40

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Table 3.5. Present-day community capacity terms. Odds ratios.

	BIVARIATE	Model C1
County population	1.00^	
County population (logged)	1.61*	.68 (NS)
Minutes from 100,000+ population city	0.98*	.99 (NS)
% with college degree	1.13***	
% with high school degree	1.19**	1.30**
Median household income	1.00**	1.00 (NS)
NCCS General organizations	1.04^	
Wald chi2	NA	13.85**
Pseudo R-squared	NA	.19

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Table 3.6. Race-related factors—Commemorators' characteristics. Odds ratios.

	BIVARIATE	Model D1	Model D2
% African American	.95**	.93^	.98
Black HS completion	1.04^	.94	
B/W HS ratio	1.3		
Black income	1.00		
B/W income ratio	1.82		
Race-related orgs	1.09		
Hate groups per million ppl, county	.93*		.84***
CONTROLS:			
County population (logged)		1.83	1.10
County % HS degree		1.12*	1.34**
Wald Chi 2	NA	12.70*	17.14**
Pseudo R2	NA	.24	.32

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Table 3.7. The ecology of memory. Odds ratios.

	BIVAR.	Model E1	Model E2	Model E3	Model E4	Model E5
<i>1877-1954 COMMEMORATION</i>						
# other in-state commemorations per 1000 lynchings	1.11***	1.09** *				
# other commems within an hour drive	5.29**		12.8***			
Any commems within an hour?	4.79*			10.64**		
Number prior commms w/in an hour	2.43				4.07^	
Number prior commems in state per 1000 lynchings	.93					1.01
<i>1950S-1960S ERA VIOLENCE</i>						
State # 1955-1965 lynching incidents per current capita	.26*	.95	1.08	1.09	1.02	1.01
<i>1950S-1960S ERA COMMEMORATION</i>						
State's # of cold case reopenings per current million people	.006 **	.000**	.000***	.000**	.000**	.000**
State's NPS important CRM sites per million	.08*	.02*	.002**	.003***	.007**	.02**
Wald Chi 2	NA	21.8** *	16.92**	17.11**	12.33*	9.61*
Pseudo R2	NA	.21	.26	.24	.18	.15

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Table 3.8. Synthetic Models. Odds Ratios.

	Baseline model	Model F1	Model F2	Model F3	Model F4	Model F5	Model F6
News coverage	1.10**	1.07**	1.06*	1.05*	1.05*	1.07*	1.05*
Innocence	8.76**	11.09**	9.79**	17.28** *	16.45** *	7.47**	12.44* *
Lynchings per 100k Af Ams	1.04**	1.04**	1.04*	1.04**	1.04**	1.03*	1.05^
County education		1.23***	1.39**	1.41***	1.40**	1.45**	1.39**
County hate groups per million people			0.84**	0.84*	0.85*	0.80**	0.84**
Cold case reopenings				0.18**	0.19**		0.00
National Parks CR sites					0.24		0.31
Any commems within an hour?						27.6**	56.5^
Wald chi2	17.72** *	28.45** *	29.58** *	53.98** *	43.05** *	24.05** *	24.4**
Pseudo R2	.43	.53	.58	.62	.62	.67	.69

^=p <.10, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

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CHAPTER 4:
TRANSFORMING COLLECTIVE MEMORY:
MNEMONIC OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES AND THE
OUTCOMES OF RACIAL VIOLENCE MEMORY MOVEMENTS

Abstract

While some academic work on collective memory has addressed the creation of “memory projects” such as memorials, monuments, and historical commissions, very little attention has been paid to either describing or explaining variation in the outcomes of such efforts. America’s racially troubled past is one topic addressed by memory movements—that is, movements aimed at transforming collective understandings of the past—with increasing frequency. This paper evaluates what factors shape the success attained by memory movements addressing historic racial violence. I draw on social movement and collective memory theories to build a framework for understanding the scope attained by memory movements that can motivate broader research on this important but heretofore unstudied phenomenon. Building on research in movements and memory studies on the constraints imposed by actual pasts and environmental conditions, I argue that *mnemonic opportunity structures* powerfully influence the success of commemorative initiatives. Qualitative interviews and archival data from several case studies, along with supplementary quantitative analyses of a set of 26 different local memory projects addressing segregation-era racial violence, are used to demonstrate the utility of the framework.

Introduction

The five decades following the end of Reconstruction were marked by significant white-on-black violence. In addition to the several thousand African Americans killed one or several at a time in lynchings (e.g. Beck and Tolnay 1991), up to several thousand more were killed in larger rampages by white mobs. Three particular white mob rampages stand out as most destructive of life: those in Elaine, Arkansas in 1919, East St. Louis, Illinois in 1917, and Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921. Though isolated sources attribute scores of fatalities to several other atrocities, these three incidents are alike in that nearly all fatality estimates agree that over 100 African Americans were killed in each incident. These incidents, towering over others in their sheer destructiveness, are additionally proximate in time and space: they occurred at the intersection of the South with the Midwest, within four years of each other, at a time of great racial tension in the U.S. during and immediately after World War I.

In the past two decades, resurgent interest by African Americans and allies in marking past U.S. racial atrocities has brought renewed attention to these and other incidents. While all three events have spawned academic attention in the form of several books and documentaries in the past decade and a half, other forms of attention have not been distributed equally. Elaine's riot was the topic of a conference in 2000 that drew hundreds of participants to nearby Helena, Arkansas, yet this conference was primarily devoted to understanding the history of the event, and has to date spawned no follow-up commemoration or activism. East St. Louis's 1917 riot was remembered with somewhat more, but still limited, consistency. It was first marked in 1997 by a small conference at a local library where a survivor spoke and a film about the incident was presented. This

marking was followed with annual commemoration ceremonies in 2004, 2005, and 2006 that drew local and state politicians, family members, and African American leaders. Since 2006, attention to the incident has waned.

Compared to Elaine and East St. Louis's riot markings, the commemorative resurgence of Tulsa's Race Riot has been enormous. First raised to a broad public in 1995 by African American state representative Don Ross in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, and first publicly commemorated in 1996 on its 75th anniversary, the incident became the object of a state study commission, a demand for reparations through the legislative process, a sustained social movement for reparations, several monuments, and enormous national and global attention. If the number of newspaper articles, books, academic journal articles, movies, and television shows about the incident is taken as one measure of its prominence, Tulsa's riot stands above even with the town of Rosewood, Florida's 1923 destruction at the hands of a white mob—the only incident of this kind around which a modern compensation claim has been successfully pursued—as the most prominent mnemonically resurgent incident of segregation-era racial violence in the United States.

Why have three similar historic incidents, all mnemonically “resurrected” (Jansen 2007) in a wave of interest in redressing past racial violence, varied so widely in the scope such resurrection has attained? More broadly, why do some efforts to awaken or transform collective memory of traumatic past events attain greater success than others? American history is replete with racial violence against African Americans, and in the wake of the civil rights movement, this history of violence has resurged in the form of various commemorative, educational, and memorial projects over the last several

decades. But once launched, projects may meet a wide array of different fates. Some come to involve thousands of people, gain government sponsorship, lead to the formation of commemorative groups that stage regular events, and leave lasting physical legacies. Others are strongly resisted by audiences unreceptive to the idea of bringing back past trauma. And still others attain little attention, leaving little impact at all on collective consciousness and collective memory. Why?

In the following sections, I draw on prior research on collective memory and social movement mobilization and outcomes to lay out a theoretical argument around reactions to and outcomes of projects to transform collective memory. Drawing on social movement and collective memory theories of the importance of external conditions and actual pasts, my explanation stresses the importance of external constraints, or *mnemonic opportunity structures*, on the scope that memory movements attain. Multiple methods and sources of data are used to support this argument. I consider the relevance of these causal factors to our understanding of movements for commemoration and redress, and argue that the examination of memory movement outcomes can be fruitful in collective memory and movements studies more broadly.

The Development, Reception, and Effects of Memory Movements

Maurice Halbwachs (1992[1925]) and subsequent early 20th Century scholars' Durkheimian understanding of commemoration saw its object and outcome as reinforcing moral consensus. The past quarter-century has seen a marked shift, as more recent research has called attention to dynamics of conflict in commemorative undertakings. For example, Scott (1995) documented elements of conflict in memorializing mine

workers in Kentucky, while Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) examined how commemoration in the absence of shared meaning might be possible in their study of the development of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Other research, such as that of Blight (2002), Brundage (2005), and Binder (2002), has documented the effects of changes in African Americans' political clout on transformed American understandings of slavery, the civil war, and African American identity.

While these studies and others like them (e.g. Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002) are foundational in understanding elements of conflict in efforts to memorialize or institutionalize particular aspects or understandings of the past, work on why memory projects such as commemorative commissions or memorials vary in the scope they attain and in their reception remains relatively scarce. Gibson's (2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Gibson and Gouws 1999) work on the effects of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on that nation's citizens suggests that those citizens who accept the "truths" proffered by the Commission are more likely to hold racially reconciled attitudes, and are more likely to respect human rights and the rule of law, than those who do not. Gibson further argues that this connection may be causal. Gibson's work suggests that enormous memory projects undertaken by governments following regime transition and massive societal upheaval can indeed affect citizens' views of the past and perhaps even their moral orientations toward the future. His work does not, however, speak to the reach of smaller-scale efforts outside the context of national-level regime transition, nor does it examine how states or publics might react to memory projects launched by non-state actors or why different projects might attain more or less success.

Other research, such as Griffin and Bollen (2009) and Harris (2006) has examined the link between individual-level memory and racial attitudes and activism, and suggested some connections. While these studies suggest the importance of memory, they do not address the reception of memory projects or the relationship between state and non-state memory movement actors in shaping trajectories and reception. Though Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) and Kohn (1995) consider how official actors respond to the development of memory projects, both studies are limited by their focus on national-level projects located in Washington, D.C. with Congressional oversight—which is not representative of most memory projects. Accordingly, we lack well-developed theory to explain why some memory projects attain greater scope and influence than others.

Specifically, prior research has left us without answers to two sets of questions that should be answered. The first set of questions is *descriptive*: What are the varied forms, strategies, and trajectories of these projects? How have these projects been received? Have states attempted to repress some projects, and facilitated others? The second set of questions concerns *explanations* of mnemonic trajectories and reception: What are the forces that shape the scope or impacts of these efforts? For example, why do some memory movements attain their mnemonic and material goals to a greater or lesser degree than others? Why do some efforts to alter memory successfully transform social rituals, physical landscapes, or collective understandings, while others do not?

While the phenomena of interest pertain to collective memory, I mine both this field and social movement studies in pursuit of answers. Indeed, the questions posed in the prior paragraph are closely motivated by some concerns from movement studies,

especially cultural outcomes of movements (e.g. Rochon 1998, Earl 2004) but also repression (Earl 2003), political outcomes (e.g. Andrews 2004, Cress and Snow 2000), and even the nature of movements themselves (Habermas 1985, Tourraine 1981, Young 2002). Research in movement studies suggests that factors such as political and discursive opportunities (Ferree et al 2002) and resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977) may shape movement emergence and outcomes, while collective memory studies offers concepts like reputational entrepreneurs (Fine 1996) and mnemonic capacity (Armstrong and Cragg 2006) to consider. I consider both these literatures in assessing a largely unexplored set of movements in which cultural goals play an important role.

American Historic Racial Violence and Memory Movement Outcomes

The Resurgence of Traumatic Pasts

America's racially violent past is a central issue in present day racial politics, as ongoing debates about issues such as affirmative action, the display of Confederate battle flags at state capitols, slavery apologies, and reparations make abundantly clear. Less well-known, however, is the recent proliferation of projects addressing specific, sometimes long-buried incidents of mass racial violence from American history. In the past three decades, more than two dozen such projects have arisen around segregation-era violence, including lynchings and so-called race riots, in the United States.³⁰

³⁰ Both the tables presented below and my consideration of memory movements around past racial violence exclude some closely related phenomena that are beyond the scope of this paper. First, I limit my analysis to incidents that occurred after 1877, because the number of prior incidents of racial violence that have resurged in collective memory is trivial—perhaps because incidents before 1877 have been outside collective memory so long that they exert less pull than more recent incidents, and also perhaps because racial violence prior to that date was so commonplace as to not be considered noteworthy in the first place. Second, my analysis does not address memory projects around general patterns of racial violence or racial injustice. For instance, projects designed to publicize or create records of early Twentieth Century segregation in general are not included, because a large part of my interest is in why some incidents rather

The memory projects that have arisen have taken an impressive array of forms. While different forms of commemoration are not necessarily directly comparable, several outcomes are of particular interest. First, government action that facilitates commemoration—whether through financial support for markers or of investigative commissions, formal apologies issued on behalf of official entities, or otherwise—is noteworthy. Memory movements have often sought such action, and government action carries a mark of legitimacy that most non-state organizations cannot achieve on their own. Second, physical commemoration, as in the placement of highway markers or the building of memorials, leaves a long-term imprint that many people may be exposed to. Such physical commemoration may take place on a large scale or in the form of activities like placing markers at gravesites, which are less likely to reach broad audiences than highway markers and monuments. Third, just as movements scholars (e.g. Staggenbourg 1994) have pointed out the importance of organizational survival to sustained social movement activism, activity by commemorative agents over a period of several years likely leaves a larger mark on local awareness of an incident than does a one-time

than others resurge. Third, my focus is on fatal violence, rather than heroism or stories of triumph. While commemoration of glorious pasts has been extensively studied and was central to Durkheim's (1992) foundational theory of commemoration, recent decades have seen a surge of apologies and efforts to deal with inglorious pasts (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991); this paper solely considers the marking of negative events. Finally, I exclude incidents that occurred during what might be called the "short" civil rights movement (Hall 2000) of 1954 to 1968 and afterwards from my analysis. My interest is in incidents that have resurged from being ignored or buried; while many incidents from the 1954-1968 period have been commemorated, most were marked as significant immediately or almost immediately and never vanished from collective memory. Additionally, racial violence between 1954 and 1968 may be subject to different mnemonic patterns than violence outside this period. The 1954-1968 period has been extensively mnemonically packaged and enshrined as "the civil rights movement," meaning that memory projects around incidents from this era might face fewer hurdles than other projects.

commemoration; the same might be said of the formation of a group dedicated to commemoration (as opposed to commemoration by single individuals).³¹

Memory movements are in some ways similar to what European movement scholars of the 1980s called new social movements (Habermas 1985, Touraine 1981): movements whose goals are often better described as cultural than political, and who see their very existence as in some sense a triumph, regardless of whether they successfully make demands on or alter the behavior of other actors or institutions. A memory movement aimed at spreading awareness of a past incident (a goal definitionally shared by all memory movements, regardless of whether they also set larger goals) by definition attains some success simply by having its target audience learn of it. Amenta et al. (2005) persuasively argue that consideration of social movement “success” in most cases may be somewhat misplaced, as focusing on whether movements or other efforts attain their desired goals ignores the possibility that they may have other important consequences, both positive and negative, relevant to those targeted by or constituting them. In this paper, I use the term success to refer to the scope of commemorative activity attained by each movement. I therefore do not mean “success” in the sense of attainment of all of a movement’s explicit goals; for example, Tulsa’s commemorative movement has been highly successful by my marker despite having been defeated in its

³¹ My focus on these types of commemoration does not incorporate memorialization of incidents in the form of books, plays, or documentaries about them, unless that memorialization has occurred in the context of other efforts. While not unimportant, such commemorations are often accessed only by elite audiences with little in the way of local ties to an incident. My interviews with commemorators about what cases have commemorative projects suggested that few, if any, of the individuals participating in local movements saw such forms of intellectual commemoration as the same phenomenon as the more “enacted” kinds of commemoration. While I do not examine incidents that have spawned only books and the like, I do present evidence on national news coverage of commemorative activities, as such coverage is an additional way that people not participating in commemorative movements may become aware of past atrocities and consider their legacies and implications for the present.

principal goal of direct financial reparations to survivors. Rather, all memory movements share an interest in disseminating awareness and understanding of the incidents they memorialize, and as such, movements that attain wide scope and impact as measured by physical commemoration, government activity, group formation, and so on are successful in that they have reshaped collective, and possibly also “collected” (Olick 1999), memory. Therefore, while any memory movement that emerges is arguably in one sense successful, in this paper I restrict the term to refer to those that attain high impact or visibility (as measured by the yardsticks described below). While memory movement emergence and success are both worthy of explanation, and are more similar than emergence and success among more narrowly political movements, they are not identical phenomena, and different forces may shape each process (McVeigh et al. 2004; McAdam and Su 2002).

Toward a Theory of Memory Movement Outcomes

The major goal of this paper is to develop a model for understanding the scope attained by memory movements. The model of memory movement outcomes I build places an emphasis on external factors. Specifically, I argue for the existence of mnemonic opportunity structures—relatively long-term, stable features of particular locations or environments, along with features of the past, that shape the prospects for memory movements to attain a wide scope. This concept is grounded in widespread agreement in social movement studies that opportunity structures affect the prospects for movements to emerge and attain desired outcomes (e.g. Amenta et al 2005, Andrews 2004). In the realm of memory, these structures include both aspects of the present, and

aspects of the past. While mnemonic opportunity structures do not wholly determine the scope that memory movements can attain, I show that they powerfully affect a movements' success in reaching a wide audience and leaving enduring legacies.

Methods and Evidence

This paper evaluates the scope attained by all 26 local commemorative projects around 1877-1954 fatal racial violence against African Americans in the United States that attained national news coverage when it occurred. I use a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support my claim that mnemonic opportunity structures powerfully shape movement outcomes. First, I present evidence on variation in the range of outcomes these projects have attained. I then draw on qualitative evidence from a range of cases to illustrate the influence of key factors. I supplement the qualitative evidence with basic quantitative comparisons (multivariate analysis is untenable with a population of 26 cases), using dichotomized variables. Overall, the mixed-method strategy is designed to both illuminate the processes through which opportunities and resources impact commemorative success, and to show that the processes illustrated are consistent with the overall distribution of opportunities, resources, and commemorative success among the population.

I draw on a wide range of evidence to evaluate the divergent outcomes of commemorative projects. Full details on the methods and data are presented in Appendix 3. The primary source is 90 semi-structured in-person or telephone interviews with mnemonic activists, conducted between mid-2007 and mid-2010. 73 of these interviews focused on commemorations of a particular incident, including at least one interview

addressing each of the 26 projects I found, while the remaining 17 interviews addressed more general racial violence commemorative projects or groups.

The second source of evidence is a unique data set I collected over the course of two years that includes all cases of enacted mnemonic mobilization around fatal racial violence against African Americans that attained national news attention between 1877 and 1954. This data set features detailed information on these 26 mnemonically resurgent incidents, their coverage in the national news at the time they occurred, the present-day economic, political, and other conditions of the county where they took place, and the kind and extent of commemoration they have seen in the past three decades. I also measured the amount of news coverage in nine national news sources from 1980 to 2009 that each incident received, using the Lexis-Nexis and America's Newspaper databases to count the number of stories devoted to each incident in major national and regional newspapers and TV and radio program transcripts.

A third source of data comes from additional qualitative research conducted at several sites. Briefly, this included visits to commemorative activities in Springfield, Illinois around its 1908 race riot, Wilmington, North Carolina around its 1898 riot, Monroe, Georgia around the 1946 Moore's Ford lynching, conferences on past racial violence and reconciliation at the University of Mississippi and Tulsa's John Hope Franklin Center, and a half-dozen visits to several other commemorative sites and activities throughout Florida and Georgia. The fourth and final source of evidence is the secondary analysis of pre-existing materials on the incidents and the commemorative movements that have formed around them.

Overall, the multiple sources of data are very useful in that they simultaneously provide depth and breadth of knowledge. While the interview, archival, newspaper, and secondary sources capture commemorators' and observers' understandings of the processes through which their efforts unfolded, the existence of the quantitative data set, combined with some qualitative data on and specific knowledge about every single case, facilitates a more thorough evaluation of the extent to which processes of causation in particular cases hold true for the full set than would otherwise be possible.

The Projects' Differing Shapes and Receptions

Table 4.1, below, identifies all incidents of fatal white-on-black violence from 1877 (the date most commonly marked as the end of Reconstruction) through 1954 which have resurged in the form of various kinds of memory projects in the past few decades.³² These projects have largely occurred since the 1980's in the Southern and Midwestern United States, have addressed incidents both large and small, and have taken a wide variety of forms. The score listed is a measure of scope of commemoration, that is, an index that gives weight to various kinds of commemoration (See Appendix 4 for details). The table also presents information on whether commemoration was government-sponsored in any way, on whether physical commemoration of the incident occurred, and the extent of national news coverage of the incident after 1980. As Table 4.1 shows, there is heavy overlap between cases with high index scores, government action around commemoration, physical marking, and news coverage, supporting the conjecture that these different outcomes can usually fruitfully be evaluated as parts of an underlying

³² Due to data limitations at the time of writing, one project—Coatesville, PA's 1911 lynching commemoration—is excluded.

construct of commemoration. The index does not incorporate national news coverage, as it is not “enacted”; rather, news coverage is presented to compare to the index. The correlation between the index scores and national media attention is .61, rising to .67 if two cases with unusual circumstances are excluded from the calculation.³³

While Table 4.1 suggests that a range of different outcomes are possible, in-depth knowledge of the cases helps flesh out this understanding. The Rosewood case, in which the state of Florida in 1994 awarded compensation to survivors and their families for property destruction and seizures by a white mob in 1923, features the most generous government participation in a commemorative/redress project (D’Orso 1996, Henry 2007). Other efforts have attained substantial scope and government support without direct financial compensation to incident survivors. For example, efforts to mark assassinated NAACP activist Harry T. Moore’s life and legacy in Mims, Florida have been supported with several million dollars in government funding, and a permanent cultural center has been established as a result. Other highly successful efforts beyond Rosewood and the Harry T. Moore case include Wilmington, NC’s marking of its 1898 riot; Springfield, IL’s commemoration of its 1908 riot; commemoration of the Moore’s Ford lynchings in Georgia; Tulsa, Oklahoma’s marking of its 1921 riot; Duluth, Minnesota’s Clayton-Jackson-McGhee Memorial Board and its work including the building of the nation’s largest lynching memorial; and Atlanta, Georgia’s activities around its 1906 riot. Even these cases, though, suggest the need for nuanced attention to commemorative outcomes. Attaining wide publicity and commemoration is not

³³ Marion, Indiana’s lynching attained high levels of media attention in 2003 when survivor James Cameron, who had attained prominence as the only living lynching survivor, died. Forsyth County, Georgia’s 1912 racial expulsion attained news attention in 1987 as a result of its enormous racist march, counter-march, and visit by Oprah Winfrey to the county that year.

necessarily synonymous with success in all of a movement's goals, as the Tulsa project sought material compensation for survivors through legislative and legal means for more than half a decade, but never attained this goal.

Nuances at the other end of the commemorative spectrum are also worth attention. In some cases, commemorations have remained small simply because they have never drawn large groups of commemorators to them. For example, the principal commemorator of Newberry, Florida's 1916 lynchings told me she simply failed to reach out to the media enough to draw large-scale involvement (Hilliard-Nunn interview). In other cases, though, small scale indicates active opposition or at least indifference to projects. A case in point is efforts to mark and repudiate the 1899 lynching of Sam Hose in Newnan, Georgia, which spurred a public outcry on the grounds that Hose's crimes were vile and his victims well-regarded.

I discuss further evidence around scope and reception below as I address potential causes of the differential trajectories that memory mobilizations take: Why do some memory movements attain much greater scale than others? Mnemonic opportunity structures, including factors related to the past and to the present, are centrally important in understanding the divergent responses among this set of cases. I illustrate each set of factors, grounding them in relevant prior memory and movement research.

Table 4.1 about here

Mnemonic Opportunity Structures

The concept of mnemonic opportunity structures is derived from social movement studies' ideas of political and discursive opportunity, as well as perspectives in collective memory that emphasize the constraints the actual past places on present-day memory projects. *Political* opportunity structure refers to "consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political system that encourage people to engage in contentious politics" (Tarrow 1998). As social movement scholars became progressively more concerned with "softer" or more cultural dimensions of movements, Ferree et al. (2002) argued that a society's *discursive* opportunity structure—which they saw as a component of its political opportunity structure—constrained and enabled efforts to frame issues in particular ways (Polletta 1998; Snow et al. 1986). These scholars argued that discursive opportunity structures, such as the very different language through which pregnancy and abortion are understood in the United States and Germany, affect the ability of contentious political actors to persuasively make various political arguments. These ideas of the importance of mostly stable, difficult-to-change aspects of the social order in shaping prospects for change find a parallel in memory studies' recent turn against pure presentism—the view that memory is easily manipulated—and the field's near-consensus that actual pasts (Schudson 1992, Schwartz 2000) and prior understandings of the past (Jansen 2007) affect the viability of projects aimed at altering social memory. One key dimension of mnemonic opportunity structure on which memory movements vary is in their present-day environments' commemorative or mnemonic capacity. A second dimension of mnemonic opportunity structures concerns historically ingrained perceptions of the moral standing of those being commemorated, or moral valence (Jansen 2007). A third key dimension is the ascribed significance of events at the

time they took place. Finally, anniversaries provide an opening through which memory movements can heighten the ascribed significance of the events they mark. Though anniversaries pass, they may offer a chance to make claims about significance that have a lasting impact. The following sections discuss each aspect of mnemonic opportunity structures.

A. Mnemonic capacity

Armstrong and Crague's (2006) analysis of the gay liberation movement's "founding myth" (Spillman 1998) developed the concept of mnemonic capacity to argue that New York City's Stonewall police raid emerged as the consensus movement origin story in part because gay activists in New York at the time of the raid had sufficient resources to popularize the story. While Armstrong and Crague's account suggests the centrality of movement indigenous resources to mnemonic capacity, the Springfield (IL) and Atlanta cases are suggestive of movements' ability to piggyback on existing mnemonic institutions. That is, I consider mnemonic capacity here as an movement-*external* factor to argue that it is not just movements or movement organizations, but also cities—or, more broadly, *environments* such as states, countries, universities—that have mnemonic or commemorative capacity.

In 1908, Springfield was the site of one of the first Northern "race riots" to gain national attention. White rioters killed five white and two black citizens, destroyed dozens of homes and businesses along with several hundred thousand dollars worth of property, and expelled thousands of African Americans from the city (Senechal de la Roche 2008). Springfield's violence received little attention in that city in the decades

following the incident. Eventual small steps toward its resurgence in local collective memory included an academic journal article published in 1960 (Crouthamel 1960), a historian's booklet aimed at the public and produced in the 1970s (Krohe 1973), and most significantly, a successful request in 1993 by two Springfield fifth-graders (who had learned of the riot through the booklet) that the city council mark the riot by putting up markers at sites of its key events. However, the salience of the riot markedly increased as its centennial approached, and in the years leading up to 2008, a variety of official and civil actors and institutions became involved in plans to commemorate the hundredth anniversary. The year 2008 saw a wide array of commemorative efforts. These included an alliance between predominantly white and predominantly black churches aimed at fostering interracial understanding, a lecture series on race relations and racial inequality, exhibits by the city's many museums and libraries, a series of special sections in the city's main newspaper marking the occasion and discussing present racial inequality, a mayoral proclamation of regret and apology, two two-week long educational summer programs for high school students (one in 2007; another in 2008), a daylong program hosted by the city's Lincoln Presidential Library, and more.

Nearly all of the commemorative activities surrounding the Springfield's riots centennial were developed and administered by long-standing institutions with well-honed commemorative capacity, and government officials universally embraced commemoration of Springfield's race riot. Further, this embrace appeared not to be solely a strategic means of co-opting commemoration (for example, getting involved in commemoration to push an interpretation that suggested no one was at fault for the events), as numerous officials and official bodies in Springfield actively pushed a strong

version of commemoration. In Springfield's memory movement, state insiders were among the principal activists. For example, several of my interviewees told me of the mayor's office independently launching a commission designed to coordinate activities around commemoration; the mayor also issued a proclamation of apology and renamed a street that currently racially divides the town into an east (black) and west (white) side as "Reconciliation Way" (Sherman interview). Previously, the city government had also funded a documentary about the event and placed eight markers commemorating the riot around the city. The director, program coordinator, and education director of the government-funded Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum actively developed and promoted an extensive commemorative exhibit and program (Harris interview, Bishop interview); the coordinator, who is an African American woman, sought to maximize its audience, in particular its local African American audience, by locating the exhibit in the free library rather than the pay-for-admission museum (Harris interview). The Illinois State library, another publicly funded institution, and the city's art museum also sponsored and hosted exhibits on the riot. The State Library's exhibit included a banner asking viewers to "get involved" that described ways viewers could "teach tolerance" and promoting the NAACP, while the art museum exhibit used the 1908 riot as a springboard for presenting an exhibit of pieces addressing all kinds of modern social inequality, including race, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality (field notes, Sill interview, Gillis interview). These displays actively promoted the idea that current inequality is serious and worthy of attention. Overall, the picture that emerges from Springfield is one of a city where a set of institutions well-suited to incubate and support commemorative

projects like the 1908 Race Riot Commemoration has long existed; the scale that the project attained there is partly attributable to these institutions.

Why was Springfield so well primed for commemoration? Springfield is a city figuratively, and in some ways literally, built on commemoration. It is nationally prominent for being Lincoln's hometown, and its landscape reflects the significance of Lincoln. Over 100 buildings in the city are named after Lincoln (Sherman interview), and Lincoln-related tourism is a significant piece of the city's economy. Further, the city is home to numerous organizations and institutions—many related to Lincoln, and others due to the city's status as the capital of Illinois—that have commemoration or memory of Lincoln as their central goal. Commemoration is part of the institutional, and perhaps even social-psychological, foundation of Springfield. To be in the city is to be exposed daily to the significance of the past.

My interviewees in Springfield repeatedly confirmed the significance of commemorative capacity in marking its race riot. One commemorator (Bishop interview) emphasized the importance of having pre-existing organizations that could apply for and administer grants for commemorative projects, suggesting that the institutional aspect of commemorative capacity was more important than cultural or psychological senses of the importance of commemoration that such institutions might cultivate. The program director of Springfield's Lincoln Museum highlighted psychological aspects of commemorative capacity, suggesting that "anybody with any sense at all" in the city of Springfield would want to acknowledge and commemorate the event's hundredth anniversary, along with the institutional imperative for a history-oriented library to commemorate (Harris interview).

Atlanta's 2006 race riot commemoration, which took place a century after its 1906 riot (in which several dozen African Americans were killed), is another instance in which pre-existing institutions well-suited for mnemonic mobilization were important in developing a large-scale project. Atlanta has long been a center of African American cultural life, with an empowered black business class, several prominent black colleges, the Martin Luther King Center and Historic Site, the Auburn Avenue Research Library, and numerous other institutions characteristic of a major city, along with the historic and cultural resources of a state capital. Further, the birth of the Coalition to Remember Atlanta's 1906 Race Riot followed quickly on the heels of somewhat similar projects based in that city addressing historic racial violence, such as the "Without Sanctuary" exhibit and the founding of Southern Truth and Reconciliation (STAR), an umbrella group seeking to address past racial violence in Georgia. According to the public information officer for Atlanta's Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site, the institutional and interpersonal linkages that had been present previously, but were augmented in the process of preparing the lynching exhibition and building STAR, were helpful in quickly building a wide-ranging commemorative project in Atlanta (Muwwakkil interview); these sentiments were echoed by others involved in the projects (Kuhn and Smith interviews).

It is intrinsically more challenging to draw out evidence on the importance of commemorative capacity from locations that lack such capacity, as a process's absence is more difficult to analyze than its presence. However, returning to Elaine, Arkansas' marking of its 1919 massacre may be instructive in considering the impact of a lack of commemorative capacity. In the late 1990s, interest in the Elaine massacre by academics grew, and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in Little Rock, Arkansas planned a

conference on the event that was held in Helena, 45 minutes from Elaine. The conference, held in 2000, drew hundreds of participants, but yielded no follow-up commemoration at all. According to one of the main organizers, there was little local interest in follow-up efforts, because of a “general feeling that people want to put it behind them” (Dillard interview). Interest at the Butler Center, two and a half hours from the site of the massacre, failed to yield sustained interest in local commemoration. This may have especially been the case because many African American families had fled the area after the massacre, with those who had remained present or moved there since the killings maintaining less of a sense of a connection to the incident. The rural and impoverished status of the city of Elaine, with its more pressing immediate economic concerns and relative paucity of African American political power likely exacerbated this forgetting (Dillard and Whitaker interviews), and the city’s near-absence of cultural and commemorative institutions meant that even the shifting of national dominant historical understandings of the event from a successfully quelled insurrection, to a “race war,” to a white massacre of African Americans, left little mark on present-day local collective memory, save for a tiny museum exhibit in Helena that marks the event as a “riot” with little attribution of blame.

How well does the import of commemorative capacity generalize to the full set of cases? When I dichotomized the projects into 13 large and 13 small projects, a county’s population size and its number of civic organizations, both potential indicators of mnemonic capacity, were closely linked to the scope of commemoration attained. For example, counties with populations over 100,000 residents were far more likely to have larger-scale commemorations than those with smaller populations, with 11 large-scale

commemorations in high-population counties and only two large-scale commemorations in low-population counties ($\chi^2=7.7$, $p<.01$). In fact, of the two large-scale commemorations of incidents that occurred in counties with small present-day populations, one—Florida’s Rosewood Massacre commemoration—largely took place at the state level and outside the county. Only the Moore’s Ford lynching (Monroe, Georgia) project’s commemoration activities were substantial and largely occurred within a low-population county.³⁴ While the small number of cases precludes multivariate analysis, the qualitative evidence about processes of commemoration from the cases described above meshes with the overall pattern, suggesting the overall importance of commemorative capacity to the mnemonic resurrection of buried tragedy.

B. Moral standing: heroes, innocents, and criminalblackmen

I turn next to aspects of mnemonic opportunity structure related to the past. Some stories have more compelling heroes, villains, and victims than others. Examining the careers of commemorative movements strongly suggests that the moral standing of key characters at the time their stories are recorded impacts the fates of these memory projects. Those who can be more readily depicted as innocent victims or as heroes unjustly murdered are much easier to successfully resurrect in memory projects. However, the paths that heroes or martyrs take to sanctification in collective memory may be different than the road traveled by innocent victims.

³⁴ According to the Moore’s Ford Memorial Committee’s secretary, Rich Rusk, the Moore’s Ford group benefitted substantially from the nearby presence of the University of Georgia, one county over. Clarke County, where the University is located, is home to more than 100,000 residents and features the educational and commemorative resources of a flagship state university.

Of the set of cases considered in this paper, none better exemplifies the commemoration of a hero than Harry T. Moore. Moore was a prominent NAACP activist in northeast Florida. In 1951, he and his wife were killed in their home by a bomb set off by Ku Klux Klan members. Moore was the first NAACP activist killed in the mid-century struggle for civil rights. His death sparked an international outcry and was marked by the NAACP with a major rally. Though his death was sporadically marked in the 1950s and 1960s, its commemoration took a major step forward in 1979 with the formation of an NAACP chapter in Brevard County (where Moore had resided and been killed) and the initiation of annual commemorative ceremonies (Gary interview). Relatives and allies successfully lobbied the state for progressively greater marking of his memory, and by the early 2000s, Moore was honored with an annual cultural festival, a bust in a government building, two buildings named after him, and a cultural complex featuring a mini-museum about his life and a replica of his home that the Klan had destroyed in 1951 (Barton and Greene interviews).

Moore was one of the first African American leaders to be honored through institutionalized forms of commemoration that began to develop in the closing decades of the 20th Century. Not only does Moore have enormous positive valence as a hero (Jansen 2007), but his story contains loathsome villains—Klan members who not only killed him, but his wife as well, and did so using dynamite on Christmas. Though Moore's death was a tragedy, his life is a clear story of heroism and martyrdom, the sort of story that Armstrong and Cragg (2006) suggest might be especially likely to flourish in collective memory of African American progress toward equality.

Yet while Moore's heroism has motivated his commemoration, this dynamic is unusual in the set of cases I address. Victimhood is emphasized far more often than heroism. A focus on innocence and its violation is quite common throughout the cases that have been more successfully marked. While more than a dozen African Americans were killed just outside Valdosta, Georgia in a 1918 "lynching bee," the only one of these victims whose name is widely known is Mary Turner. Turner had complained to authorities after her husband's murder; the pregnant Turner was then killed and disemboweled, with her fetus torn out and stomped on by the lynchers. The commemorative project that emerged in the mid-2000's around the incident goes by her name (The Mary Turner Project), and its success in getting Georgia's Historic Markers program to approve a commemorative sign may be related to the gruesome nature of this story of innocence violated. Conversely, incidents which lack credible claims to innocent victims face strongly uphill battles. In Price, Utah, Coatesville, Pennsylvania, Marion, Indiana, and Newnan, Georgia, projects seeking to commemorate lynchings of those strongly regarded as guilty of serious crimes struggled against resistance. This resistance was especially steep in Price, where death threats were issued against commemorators (Davis interview). In Newnan, efforts to mark the 1899 spectacle torture and lynching of Sam Hose, who had been accused of murder and rape, floundered on the perception that commemorating Hose's death was an insult to those he was believed to have killed (Minarcine interview). Russell-Brown (1998) has used the term "criminalblackman" to describe the strong association in many whites' minds between African American men and violent or sexual crime, suggesting that African American males associated with crime are easily marked as deserving only condemnation. The moral ambivalence of

commemorating a lynching victim believed to have perpetrated horrible crimes poses obstacles not present in cases where the violation of a lynching victim's innocence is clear.

Bivariate analyses using the full set of cases support my suggestion of a link between the moral standing of victims and the scope that present-day movements attained. Incidents which lacked any victim marked by media as innocent were near-absent from the cluster of larger commemorations. Of the seven incidents in which the guilt of all victims was agreed upon, only one—the grotesque torture and burning of Jesse Washington in Waco, Texas, in 1915, which an estimated ten thousand people attended—attained large-scale commemoration. Efforts to commemorate even this killing faced substantial resistance for many years, and only yielded significant action after much struggle (Welter interview). The size of the crowd that came to watch the killing, and the fact that newspapers had documented thousands of people reveling in the spectacle of Washington being tortured, were important points in the arguments that proponents of commemoration marshaled in their campaign to draw statements of regret and apology from the city and county councils. While Washington was still marked as likely guilty, to modern sensibilities the malice of the mob that tortured him now far overshadowed his guilt. Further, that Washington had been described by observers as mentally retarded, and was a teenager at the time of his killing, were now viewed as circumstances alleviating his guilt and exacerbating the brutality of his killers. Though the Washington story lacked a compelling innocent victim, then, its commemoration was facilitated by the fact that by the start of the 21st century, its crowd could be seen as a compelling villain whose evil could be symbolically repudiated through commemoration.

If the moral valence of the person or person being commemorated matters significantly, why has innocence rather than heroism usually been emphasized by commemorative projects? This emphasis on victimhood seems at odds with Armstrong and Cragé's (2006) argument that movements seek to mark their heroic origins. The answer may lie in the different groups constituting both the producers and audiences of African American history. Most commemorative movements have occurred through interracial groups, and stories of innocent African Americans may be especially compelling to white American allies—or at least, may be perceived that way by activists seeking to promote stories that will move audiences. Romano (2006) argues that stories of the civil rights movement that have gained currency among whites focus on African American victims more than African American heroes. Sympathetic white understandings of past violence and struggles for justice may be concerned less with black agency than with white redemption through forming standing up for the oppressed.³⁵

Commemorative efforts that portray Harry T. Moore as a hero do not easily allow modern-day whites partaking of commemoration to imagine themselves filling a void as a defender of innocents; that role has already been symbolically filled by Moore in a way not true in projects focused on violations of innocence through victimization. Given this,

³⁵ Romano suggests that the “four little girls” killed in Birmingham, Alabama’s 1963 church bombing have received dozens of times more attention than the two teenage boys shot and killed in the street there that same day, because little girls killed in church is a more striking portrait of innocence. Similarly, the murder of 14-year old Emmett Till, who was in no way involved with the civil rights movement, and his mother’s display of his mutilated teenage corpse, galvanized attention to civil rights among whites to a greater extent than the killing of any black activist had. While Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks are portrayed as heroes in collective memory for all Americans, the strategic calculations that characterized the protest careers of these most iconic of civil rights heroes made have vanished from popular accounts focusing on Parks as a woman who sat down because she was tired and as King as the moral conscience of a nation.

how is it that Moore's commemoration has been successful? In Moore's case, it was the NAACP, not white allies, who were critical in pushing for his commemoration, and black politicians played the key role in gaining government support for the projects in his memory. Sustained efforts by the NAACP and black politicians ensured that Moore's legacy—one of activism rather than innocence—was honored.

This is not to argue that the racial composition of commemorators determines whether a story of victimization or of heroism will be told, not least because successful collective memories often combine elements of tragedy and triumph (Irwin-Zarecka 1994). Rather, stories of innocence may succeed principally through one process, while stories of heroism take shape mainly through another set of mechanisms, and accounts that ignore either process may be incomplete. Though Armstrong and Cragie (2006) suggest that Stonewall became the gay liberation movement's origin story because that riot was more of a victory than other similar events, and hence was more "commemorable," that origin story took hold at a time when those most interested in gay liberation were gay activists seeking to unify and rally gays and lesbians into a politically self-aware collective—a particular historic juncture that is not generalizable to the recent emergence of efforts to mark segregation-era violence against African Americans. Rather, the "bicultural" (Ruffins 1992) nature of marking black history in the United States means that stories of segregation-era violence are emerging with an eye to multiple audiences at a time when African Americans already have an extremely high degree of collective consciousness.

C. Ascribed significance and path dependence

Jansen (2007) and Saito (2006) suggest that memory work is shaped by prior remembrance (or for Saito, involves “reiterated problem-solving”). Several cases of marking past violence help specify this argument by showing that the opportunities that memory mobilizations draw on may be path-dependent. Hooks and McQueen (2010) maintain that path dependency occurs when each successive step in a particular direction lowers the cost of additional steps in that direction, while raising the costs or difficulty of shifting to an alternate route. Here, prior attributions of significance to an incident of violence appear to play a major role in the viability of successive claims to significance made by advocates. Incidents regarded as having had major historic impacts by groups other than African Americans alone appear easier to successfully resurrect in broader collective memory. The establishment of past salience through external mirrors such as newspapers, history books, and historic trajectories is useful to movements, as movements where such mirrors reflect sharply can more easily turn their focus to addressing the hurdle of demonstrating salience in the *present*.

Wilmington, North Carolina’s 1898 Race Riot is a powerful illustration of the impact of historic significance. The incident itself was remarkable in that it stands as the only successful coup in U.S. history, as white Democrats overthrew a coalition white Republican-African American government, killed dozens of African Americans, and drove many more out of town. Its repercussions led to ongoing but submerged racial tension throughout the Twentieth Century, tensions which occasionally flared in incidents like the city’s 1971 “Wilmington Ten” trial and conviction of ten African Americans on charges of attacking police officers (Hossfeld 2004). As the centennial approached, longtime civil rights activist Bertha Todd was able to use the widespread awareness of

the coup in the city to successfully argue that some kind of centennial marking of the coup was inevitable and that interested parties should pro-actively shape the form of that marking (Todd and Anthony interviews). This argument, in combination with the organizational support that the well-connected Todd was able to develop, proved extremely persuasive in drawing government and business leaders into one of the largest-scale commemorations of the set. Had the coup been regarded as less historic or important, it is unlikely that Todd's argument would have succeeded.

A similar story can be told of Springfield. Springfield's 1908 riot was covered by the media at the time as a disgrace to Lincoln's city, and the event gave rise to the NAACP, which for the century since has consistently been a major player in American racial politics. The immediate consensus that the riot was disgraceful meant that efforts a century later to resurrect memory of the event did not have to alter the *valence* of the event, but only amplify its *salience* (Jansen 2007). Further, the close link between the event and the formation of the NAACP meant that a powerful organization would have an interest in promoting the significance of the event. That activists at the time of the Springfield Riot saw it as immensely significant helped yield both institutional and symbolic resources for those seeking to mark it a century later.

Springfield and Wilmington's incidents had constructed but very real historic consequences that would shape their potential for successful mnemonic resurrection a century later. These two cases suggest that commemorative projects may be path-dependent, with the amount and intensity of attention an incident receives at and after its occurrence shaping the ability of later would-be memory activists to mobilize movements. The broader set of cases reveals broader support for the importance of the

mark an incident originally made into collective consciousness when it took place. Nine of the 26 incidents failed to elicit more than ten news stories in three major white-oriented and two major black-oriented newspapers at the time of their occurrence; only two of these nine (Rosewood, FL and Waco, TX—which attained nine and ten stories, respectively) attained large-scale commemoration. Among the 17 incidents that drew more than ten stories, eleven attained large-scale commemoration ($\chi^2=4.2$, $p=.04$). Similarly, of the 19 incidents with fewer than ten fatalities that saw any initiation of commemoration, only six became large-scale projects. Conversely, all but one of the eight “massacres” (incidents with ten or more fatalities) in which a project was initiated yielded above-average commemoration; only Elaine’s 1919 riot yielded a small-scale effort ($\chi^2 = 6.5$, $p = .01$). While the overall findings here, then, suggest that those seeking to mark more horrific incidents may have an easier road to hoe than activists marking smaller atrocities, they by no means indicate that commemorative success proceeds automatically from large-scale tragedy, as even most large-scale atrocities have not yielded commemorative projects (see previous chapter).³⁶

Understandings of what events are significant and why such events are significant changes over time. Yet here, the marks made by various incidents when they occurred were strongly tied to their success as resurgent memories, a century later. In her discussion of the persistence of the United States’ “founding moment” as a focus of the

³⁶ I collected information on all cases I could find of incidents where ten or more African Americans were killed since 1877. About a third have seen commemorative projects. There is some evidence that large-scale atrocities yield intellectual or artistic forms of commemoration (rather than enacted commemoration) at high rates. Among the more than two dozen incidents I found of 1877-1954 massacres, some that remained unmarked by commemorative projects—such as Chicago’s 1919 riot, Detroit’s 1943 riot, Thibodaux’s 1887 massacre, and New Orleans’ 1900 riot—have been the subjects of books, plays, and the like. As noted earlier, these cases are not included here, because I exclude cases that have seen only intellectual commemoration.

country's anniversary celebrations even as the founders' enslavement of Africans and genocide of Native Americans came to attention, Spillman (1998) argues that events that are more "multivocal" make more robust collective memories, because they can weather shifts in prevailing political attitudes. Yet the findings of this study suggest nearly an opposite point. Those incidents that were least ambiguous when they occurred—the most marked, the most fatal, and the most gruesome—were the strongest contenders for successful resurrection. This was the case not just in spite of, but rather *because of* the dramatic changes in racial attitudes that have occurred over the past century. Multivocality may be an asset in an incident's ability to weather changing political winds when it comes to Durkheimian commemoration, where commemorations are unifying, consensual, and uplifting. But in negative commemorations that reckon with traumatic events, multivocal incidents of racial violence (such as those with disputed accountability, or lacking clearly innocent protagonists) are less memorable because they carry murkier implications.

Wood (2003) has documented the transformation over time of lynching photographs from congratulatory markers of white supremacy into civil rights resources, first in the crusade against lynching, and subsequently in efforts to educate present-day Americans about the horrors of the past. A similar transformation has taken place in the realm of traumatic incidents of racial violence. For example, Hossfeld (2004) argues that the Wilmington Race Riot was publicly celebrated by white North Carolinians in the decades shortly after it occurred, before going "underground" as changing ideas about the acceptability of racial terror began to take hold and the incident became an embarrassment to whites. Spillman argues that Australia's founding moment disappeared

from its bicentennial commemorations because it unequivocally carried a message about the unimportance of the natives of the continent, who had been present long before the European's "founding." But had aborigines launched commemorative projects of their own, it is exactly the most clear-cut instances of oppression of natives the Europeans found in Australia that might occupy central positions in these negative commemorations. Instances of racial terror such as the gutting of Mary Turner carried a clear message to African Americans in the early 20th Century; by the close of the century, their message was equally sharp—but changing moral attitudes and an evolving political climate (Conway 2009) had rendered the message into a lesson directed in large part toward whites, about the horrors perpetrated by their forebears. For these reasons, among grotesque or traumatic collective memories, those that are the *least* multivocal and have strong mnemonic consensus (Griffin and Bollen 2009) may be the most "successful" in resurging if a major transformation in society that empowers the original victims of such traumas to mark such ugly pasts takes place.

D. Centennial Anniversaries

Nine commemorated incidents of fatal racial violence from 1877 to 1954 have seen a centennial anniversary. Though the passing of a centennial was not helpful in pushing forward commemoration in all of these cases, my interviews and archival work showed that in at least five of the cases, the centennial anniversary made a difference in generating activity; the effect was very substantial in at least four cases. In Wilmington, the historic significance of the event was salient in the context of the imminent centennial, as discussed above. Somewhat similar processes also took place in Atlanta

and Springfield around their 1906 and 1908 riots. In Pierce City, Missouri, journalist Murray Bishoff had resurrected memory of a 1901 lynching there in a series of articles in 1991, but the centennial anniversary in 2001 inspired him to launch annual (albeit small) remembrance ceremonies (Bishoff interview). In Chattanooga, Tennessee, activists had in 2000 succeeded in clearing the conviction of 1906 lynching victim Ed Johnson, but the 2006 centennial gave rise to a march, ceremony, and play in remembrance of the event (Thirkill, Phillips, and Curriden interviews).

Centennial anniversaries of two other of the nine events occurred prior to the incidents being resurrected—the 1899 Sam Hose killing in rural Georgia was not resurrected until 2007, and the 1905 Watkinsville, Georgia lynchings were not addressed until 2008. In these cases, then, whatever effect a centennial might have had was weak or non-existent in the absence of other factors promoting commemoration. In the two remaining cases, anniversaries had little or no impact on commemoration. The stronger effect of anniversaries in more urban areas with more historically marked events (Wilmington, Atlanta, Springfield, and Chattanooga, where the lynching had triggered the only US Supreme Court criminal trial in history) suggests a combinatorial dynamic: anniversaries were more mnemonically powerful when other important opportunities were present. High levels of commemorative capacity and perceived historic significance fuel perceptions not purely of “commemorability” (Armstrong and Cragg 2006), but rather perceptions of the *inevitability* of commemoration. In Springfield, one activist, citing the importance of commemoration to the city’s identity, told me that “anybody with any sense at all” could know that the event would and should be marked, while in Wilmington, a broad sense of inevitability served as a self-fulfilling prophecy fueling

action (Kurzman 2004; Marwell & Oliver 1993). “Matthew effects” in commemoration (Schwartz 2009) may in this way include the ability of the best-endowed events and settings to disproportionately benefit from resources like anniversaries.

Considering the last three aspects of mnemonic opportunity structure together—that is, those related to the past—suggests that historically ingrained perceptions of moral goodness, attributions of significance, and centennials all affect the viability of present-day memorial projects, because they directly impact the appearance of empirical commensurability (Benford and Snow 2000)—that is, the correspondence with “common-sense” understandings of historical reality—of commemorations. That is, commemoration is widely understood as something that is supposed to occur for events of historical and moral import, especially on centennials. While perceptions of moral standing and attributions of significance change very slowly, and centennials are transitory, all three factors serve as factors that serve memory movements in their efforts to transform understandings of the past. These three factors, together with a city or environment’s present-day commemorative capacity, are key influences on the scope a memory movement may attain.

Additional Factors: Mnemonic Hooks and Movement Characteristics

Overall, the qualitative evidence and broader patterns presented here support the claim that conducive opportunity structures were nearly necessary conditions for memory movement success, as nearly all the more successful movements scored above average on *both* past and present indicators of mnemonic opportunity structure. There are, however, two gaps in the findings presented thus far. First, I have not yet explained how some

commemorative movements—namely, those in Rosewood, Moore’s Ford, and Waco—managed to attain greater than average success in seemingly inhospitable conditions. Second, my analysis of the forces shaping memory movements’ careers has excluded factors that movements themselves might directly influence. Though these factors are secondary in importance to external factors, this study did provide some insight into the two additional explanatory factors of mnemonic hooks—which were fateful in at least two cases—and movement approaches, which did not appear to be of primary importance in the binary classification of the outcomes in any of the cases considered here, but did have some effects (and might well affect outcomes in other types of memory movements). Consideration of mnemonic hooks and of the most important movement-internal factors in this set of cases is presented in Appendix 5.

Conclusion

My principal finding in this paper is that mnemonic opportunity structure (including commemorative capacity, historically ingrained perceptions of moral standing, historically constructed significance, and centennials) exerted a strong influence on how much memory movements around past racial violence were able to make a mark on collective memory. This paper builds on prior research by showing that the conceptual tools of movement studies can be fruitfully applied to understanding how collective memory is shaped, and by extending these tools to an important but previously understudied set of cultural movements. Further, its combination of close attention to individual cases with the use of a medium-sized population suggests that the utility of this

framework is both broad and deep, something that is less certain in studies based on single cases or those that solely operate at a macro, large-sample level.

Three secondary conclusions are of note, as well. First, I found that in regard to historical perceptions of moral standing that shape commemorative success, there may be multiple routes through which victims can be marked as commemoration-worthy. Scholars should pay attention to these different routes and to the possibility that different commemorators may be drawn to different positively valued characteristics—for example, African Americans may be relatively more drawn to stories of black heroism, while white allies are more emotionally compelled by stories of African American innocence. This paper has not attempted to “prove” this conjecture; rather, this possibility should be considered as an important addition to models that do not recognize there may be multiple pathways to commemorative success, depending on the constituencies of commemoration and the characteristics they seek to honor (e.g. Irwin-Zarecka 1994, Armstrong and Cragge 2006). Second, I have shown that the multivocality that may allow positively-commemorated historic moments to successfully weather cultural shifts and endure in commemoration (Spillman 1998) operates differently in the realm of negative commemoration. In fact, incidents whose message and meaning was the clearest and most repulsive—or “anti-charismatic”—were most successful in their commemorative resurrection, most likely because negative commemoration centers on repudiation. Finally, my finding that centennials were especially important in urban locations with well-marked incidents suggests a combinatorial dynamic, and reveals that examining perceptions of the *inevitability* of commemoration may be an important refinement to Armstrong and Cragge’s (2006) suggestion to examine perceptions of commemorability.

How applicable are the findings of this study to collective memory studies and movement studies more broadly? It is noteworthy that external constraints appear to play as strong or a stronger role in the success of memory movements than they do in the initiation of such movements (Chapter 3). In Chapter 3, several cases of commemorative emergence, such as those in Pierce City, Missouri and Abbeville, South Carolina, appear wholly unpredictable from a structural framework. By contrast, the movement-external predictors discussed in this chapter appeared important in nearly every case of above-average success. The finding that structural factors play a stronger role in success than emergence may be somewhat unusual in movement studies; for example, much movements scholarship (e.g. Ganz 2000, Cress and Snow 2000; Andrews 2004) finds that movement-internal characteristics are important in outcomes. The unusual strength of external predictors in memory movement success, more so than emergence, may be a result of the low-cost nature of such movements: unlike most of the movements studied in the scholarly literature, memory movements are low-cost, low-risk, and relatively easy for single individuals to start. However, their fate depends on mnemonic opportunity structures and the extent to which key decision-makers nearby find them compelling, factors which are more difficult for even determined commemorators to alter. It seems plausible that movement-external factors may also have more power to shape the outcomes than the emergence of other cultural movements beyond those studied here. Future research on other types of movements that engage with memory, culturally-oriented movements, and low-cost movements, should examine this possibility. In the modern developed West, social revolutions are quite rare, but efforts to change school curricula (Binder 2002), remember fallen heroes (Dwyer and Alderman 2008), and re-

interpret national holidays and rituals (Kubal 2008) are common indeed. A social movement perspective on collective memory could be useful indeed in advancing our understanding of phenomena like these, whose very omnipresence may have contributed to their scholarly under-appreciation thus far.

CHAPTER 4 TABLES

Table 4.1. Commemorations of 1877-1954 fatal racial violence against African Americans.

Event	Score	Government action?	Sustained action?	Physical marking?	News stories:	Begun by:
Tulsa, OK 1919 race riot	24.5	Major	Yes, over a decade	Extensive	92	1995
Rosewood, FL 1923 burning	24.5	Major	Yes, over a decade	Moderate	58	1994*
Springfield, IL 1908 race riot	22	Major	Intermittent 1990s-2000s	Moderate	5	1992
Wilmington, NC 1898 coup	19	Major	Yes, over a decade	Extensive	13	1995
Monroe, GA 1946 lynchings	19	Major	Yes, over a decade	Moderate	55	1997
Mims, FL 1951 assassination	17	Major	Yes, decades	Extensive	8	1979
Duluth, MN 1920 lynchings	16.5	Major	Yes, 1990s-2000s	Extensive	10	2000**
Atlanta, GA 1906 riot	16	Moderate	Some, over several years	None	14	2005
Ocoee, FL 1920 killings/riot	15	Minor	Yes, over several years	Minor	2	1995
Chattanooga, TN 1906 lynching	12.5	Moderate	Intermittent, 2000-2006	No	4	2000
Valdosta, GA 1918 lynchings	12	Moderate	Yes (so far)	Moderate	0	2008
Waco, TX 1915 lynching	11	Minor	Yes	No	15	1998
East St. Louis, IL 1917 riot	11	Minor	Some	No	2	1997
Pierce City, MO 1901 lynchings	9.5	No	Yes	Minor	1	2001*
Butler, GA 1946 killing	7	No	Some	No	3.5	2007
Omaha, NE 1919 riot	6	No	Intermittent	Minor	2	1997
Abbeville, SC 1915 lynching	6	No	Some	No	5	2005
Marion, IN 1930 lynchings	6	No	No	No	15	2003
Annapolis, MD 1906 lynching	5.5	Yes	No	Minor	1	2001
Price, UT 1925 lynching	5	No	No	No	3	1998
Elaine, AR 1919 riot	5	Moderate	No	No	6	2000

Forsyth Co, GA 1912 lynching	4	Minor	No	No	29.5	1987
Springfield, MO 1906 lynchings	4	Minor	Intermittent	Minor	6	1999
Watkinsville, GA 1905 lynchings	2.5	No	No	No	1	2008
Newberry, FL 1916 lynchings	2.5	No	No	No	0	2005
Newnan, GA 1899 lynching	2	No	No	No	1	2007

* News coverage had resurged about a decade prior to other kinds of commemoration being initiated in the Rosewood and Pierce City cases.

** Accounts in Duluth conflict on whether the NAACP and other actors had initiated regular commemorations beginning in 1991. 2000 was the beginning of a major commemorative push that resulted in the formation of the memorial committee and the construction of Duluth's lynching memorial.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has drawn on social movement and collective memory theories in evaluating the resurgence of attention to past racial violence in the United States. The second chapter developed the concept of memory movements, provided a descriptive introduction to the set of such movements concerning buried American racial violence, and proposed a set of hypotheses about such movements using prior research and theory along with examples from my study. The third chapter used movements theory to show that incident characteristics, present contexts, and diffusion dynamics are important forces that help explain why commemorative movements have emerged around some incidents while many other, apparently similar incidents have not been unearthed. The final substantive chapter focused closely on mnemonic opportunity structure, developing and using this idea to explain why there is variation in the scope that those movements that have emerged manage to attain.

The dissertation illustrates that memory studies and movement studies have much to gain from each other in terms of better understanding the important phenomenon of racial violence memory movements. I believe the benefits of this inter-field dialogue are broader, as well. While Chapters 3 and 4 provide firm empirical support for some of the hypotheses proposed in the first chapter in one particular set of movements, scholars could evaluate the utility of these hypotheses and the explanations proposed in Chapters 3 and 4 with regard to other, similar movements. There are also aspects of the theoretical

agenda proposed in this project that I have not carried to fruition here. For example, future work on memory movements might more closely examine the significance of movement-internal factors in shaping outcomes, or the potential contributions of memory studies to movement scholarship's understanding of culture. Further, additional work on the impacts of memory and the "bottom-line" outcomes of mnemonic mobilizations has the potential address memory scholars' growing concern with reception and movement scholars' burgeoning interest in outcomes.

Given that the resurgence of interest in past trauma in general, and past American racial violence in particular, is historically recent, studying memory movements is in some ways akin to firing at a moving target. For example, important developments occurred in several of the local commemorative efforts, as well as in efforts to uncover Mississippi's civil rights era crimes and to attain state and federal apologies for past injustices, during the course of this research. The contemporaneous nature of this study and these movements raises the issue of the extent to which the explanations proposed in this study will remain valid over time, as actors continue to contest difficult pasts. Will future memory movements look like those of present and immediate past?

Memory movements of the late Twentieth and early Twenty-First Centuries have embraced the marking of trauma to an extent that would have been almost unthinkable to earlier memory scholars and commemorators. The global historical trend, especially in wealthier Western societies, has unmistakably been toward marking traumatic pasts. However, just as the surge of marking past traumas was likely not anticipated by either memory scholars or previous generations of mnemonic activists, future evolutions in the nature of mnemonic mobilization may catch this generation's scholars and

commemorators off guard. As Yogi Berra reminds us, predictions are difficult, especially about the future. At the close of the first decade of this millennium, the most prominent memory movement in the United States concerns mnemonic activism around the American Revolutionary War by political conservatives, who see themselves as combating oppression (by a president some believe to be exacting revenge for the historic trauma of slavery) akin to that under a colonial power. The “Tea Partiers” embrace of a historic narrative that emphasizes heroism and eventual triumph, rather than tragedy, suggests that even now, not all who see themselves as beleaguered will embrace the politics of marking past trauma. Rather, some groups may continue to adopt triumphal stories. It appears quite likely that memory movements will become ever more frequent and salient in present day politics and culture, but the forms and approaches of such movements remain unknown. While it may be that some memory movements adopt approaches similar to those of the movements described in this project, or to those of earlier movements, perhaps other, future memory movements will embrace strategies and take forms that are currently inconceivable to this, or any other, analyst of such movements.

APPENDIX 1: METHODS, CHAPTER 3

Commemoration of historic racial violence is a very rare event. Of the minimally thousands, and quite possibly tens of thousands, of incidents of post-Reconstruction mass white-on-black violence, at most a few dozen have been the subjects of commemoration or redress activity in the past several decades. Because commemoration is such a rare outcome, drawing a random sample of 100 incidents without heed to the commemorative outcome would likely leave me with about one instance of commemoration (and 99 non-commemorations), making inference impossible. Fortunately, King and Zeng (2001) identify a strategy for dealing with very rare outcomes in which the positive cases are known (such as instances of state failures out of all possible states, or the eruption of war between all possible country dyads, or this case) that does not require collecting full data on thousands of cases to find enough positive instances of the outcome to make analysis feasible. This strategy, which I rely on in my analysis, involves using every positive instance of the outcome, drawing a representative sample of negative instances of the outcome, and applying frequency weights to the negative cases.

There were an initial total of 28 positive cases. I excluded two of these cases from the analysis because of data limitations at the time of writing. Following a preliminary analysis (described below) that established that national newspaper attention at the time an incident occurred is a nearly absolutely necessary condition for later resurgence, I only considered cases that had at least one article mainly devoted to them in one of *The New York Times*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Amsterdam News*, or *The Chicago Defender*, during this time period. This left the number of positive cases at 25.

After developing a list of all commemorated instances of violence, I constructed a list of all uncommemorated incidents of interest, in order to sample the negative cases from this population. My initial foray into this task involved combining: (1) all cases from the lynching database developed by Tolnay and Beck (1991) for ten Southern states; (2) all cases from the remaining U.S. states drawn from lists published by the Tuskegee Institute and the NAACP; and (3) all incidents I identified from a detailed canvass of several dozen secondary sources that were not identified as lynchings but featured one or more black deaths (for example, most race riot deaths do not appear on the lynching lists).

Using a random number generator, I drew 50 incidents from this list of uncommemorated incidents, and began collecting further information on each. I found that while all but one of my previously-identified recently *commemorated* incidents had at least one article mainly about them printed at the time they took place in one of the major newspapers mentioned above, about four out of five of the *uncommemorated* incidents were *not* mentioned in one of the major papers. The commemorative resurgence rate for incidents that appeared in the national press when they occurred, then, appeared to be about 50 (and perhaps 100) times greater than for incidents that did not appear in the national press when they occurred. While this is a noteworthy finding, and suggests a heavy amount of path dependence with at least some contemporary *national* interest serving as a nearly completely necessary condition for recent commemorative resurgence, the effect is so large that it threatens to preclude identifying any effects of any other factors. I therefore turned to the sampling strategy discussed in the text.

In assembling the set of newspaper stories to draw on for my analysis, the unavailability of some of the papers for some years meant that I was only able to search *The Chicago Defender* from 1910 onwards (it was founded in 1905) and *The New York Amsterdam News* from 1922 onwards (it was founded in 1909), and was unable to search *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* from 1943 to 1954. These gaps have little to no impact on the utility of the sample drawn, for several reasons. First, by 1943, lynching was extremely noteworthy in the United States, with fewer than ten lynchings per year, suggesting that no information was lost due to the restriction of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* availability; any lynchings after 1942 that would have made the Atlanta paper were almost certainly reported in one of the other papers. Second, the *Chicago Defender* before 1910 was a one-person operation that drew its information solely from other newspapers and had little national attention; it was not until 1915 that the *Defender's* founder could even hire his first employee. Similarly, the *Amsterdam News* was not one of the leading black papers until several decades after its founding (African American Registry, N.D.). Finally, among the total of nearly 100 total positive and negative cases I eventually drew for my final sample plus a supplementary analysis of the bloodiest incidents, only three incidents (the 1998-commemorated 1925 lynching of Robert Marshall in Price, Utah, plus a 1915 lynching in Mississippi and a 1934 lynching in Tennessee) were reported in *The Chicago Defender* that did not also make the white press, while the *Amsterdam News* reported *no* additional stories that did not also make the white press, suggesting that the five missing years of information from the black press (1905-1909) ultimately imposed little distortion.

My search in the two historical newspaper databases for the relevant key words yielded about 15,000 articles. While this population has its limitations, it is far superior to all known alternatives, such as relying solely on the lynching lists—which are rife with false positives (Tolnay and Beck 1991) and likely miss thousands of cases due to their lack of coverage of cities and counties that lacked newspapers (Loewen, personal conversation, 2009). The fact that all but one of the positive cases of commemoration of fatal incidents were identified with the terms “race riot,” “lynched,” or “lynching” in their abstract or title in the national papers is further evidence of the close fit between the theoretical construct of interest and the search process used. In other words, I believe that very few incidents of extralegal racial killing that made the national media did so without at least one of the terms “lynching,” “race riot,” or “lynched” being featured prominently. Because prior exploratory research revealed that many of the articles might be irrelevant to my search (for example, if they reported on the progress of the anti-lynching bill in Congress rather than a specific lynching, mentioned a “race riot” that was a fistfight with no deaths, were about an incident I had already identified as a commemorated one, or were about an averted lynching), I drew every 60th story in order to ensure an initial large sample of negative outcomes of about 250 potentially useful stories. Of these stories, 104 initially appeared to be mainly about an incident that met my criteria. I then randomly sampled 60 of these 104 stories. For each incident mentioned in these 60 stories, I re-searched the databases for more information about that specific event using keywords drawn from the article; this process knocked several apparently qualifying incidents out of the sample. Combined with dropping articles that mentioned the same incident as a previously drawn article, the process left me with 50

stories about unique incidents—a number that meets King and Zeng’s suggestion to draw at least twice as many negative cases as positive cases in rare-events research.

For each of the 50 uncommemorated incidents, I collected the same information as I did for my positive incidents (I describe the information collected in the text and in Appendix 2). The final step in constituting a representative sample involved a probability selection weighting process. Because the operational population used *stories* rather than *incidents*, there is an unequal probability of selection, with more-reported incidents more likely to enter the sample. I compensate for this by estimating the average number of articles per incident in my population. After determining the number of stories for each individual incident in my sample, I then weight each incident by the inverse of this frequency. In the second step, I adjust this weight by estimating the total number of unique incidents in the population. I calculated that about 700 incidents meeting my criteria made the national newspapers when they occurred; this figure is roughly consistent with my finding that less than one-fifth of lynchings listed in the national lists attained national news attention. Subtracting the 25 positive outcomes from the 700 incidents means that the *average* weight assigned to each of the 50 incidents will be about $13/700$, because my sample of 50 uncommemorated cases is $1/13^{\text{th}}$ the size of the total population. Each *positive* case of commemoration, of course, is merely assigned a sampling weight of $1/700$.

The highest-weighted uncommemorated cases (those that had a single story about them) received a weight about ten times the average, while the incident with the most stories received a weight about one-tenth the size of the average uncommemorated case. In samples where weights are not strongly and systematically associated with the

outcome, analysts sometimes use unweighted analyses as a check on the validity of weighted analyses. Analyses using unweighted data would be meaningless and likely highly distorted in this case since the weights are completely associated with the outcome. That is, an analysis using unweighted data would over-represent the positive cases by a factor of several dozen, yielding systematic errors throughout the results. I neither conduct nor present such an analysis.

APPENDIX 2: NOTES ON MEASURES, CHAPTER 3

Estimated death count serves as the most objective measure of an incident's intrinsic impact. While the number of confirmed fatalities was usually closely related to the number of estimated fatalities, for several cases this was not the case. For cases where discrepancies appeared, I used the estimate that appeared to be taken most seriously by current historians.

The term that measures whether at least one victim was considered to have been innocent of a major crime draws on newspaper accounts published immediately after each incident. (Because memory movements may seek to transform perceptions of guilt or innocence, using contemporary perceptions of guilt or innocence would introduce bias.) I code this binary variable "1" only in those cases where it is clear that at least one victim was regarded by the media to have committed no crime, or to have committed a nonviolent crime or taboo breach (such as cursing a white man, keeping whites out of a dance for African Americans, and so on). All cases in which victims' guilt or innocence in a violent crime is unclear are coded as zero, since commemorators are unable in those cases likely unable to draw on historical newspaper evidence of innocence in making moral claims about the victims. I coded for strong consensus of victims' innocence rather than strong consensus of their guilt because in many cases newspapers did not provide any basis on which to determine whether guilt was regarded as uncertain or widely accepted.

To track media attention following an incident, I used an array of searches to identify the number of stories mainly about each incident from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Atlanta Journal & Constitution*, searching separately for each incident in

my sample using all relevant keyword combinations I could uncover. I also identified the number of stories mainly about each incident in the weekly *Chicago Defender* and *New York Amsterdam News*. I then summed the five figures. Because my data source only began tracking the *Chicago Defender* in 1910 and the *Amsterdam-News* in 1922, and ceased tracking the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in 1942, I rely solely on data from three or four sources in some years; in those cases, I multiply the number of stories found in the sources by 1.25, 1.33, or 1.67 to adjust for the disparity. I only do this in cases where the information for a paper is not available, not in cases where the paper did not exist, because the latter limitation is a real (rather than artifactual) indicator of less national attention.

Organizational data are drawn from the National Center for Charitable Statistics. The NCCS data set, used fruitfully by McVeigh (2006) in his study of county-level activism and crime, tracks all nonprofit organizations that have filed with the IRS on an annual basis, beginning in 1995. It is a strong indicator of overall county-level nonprofit organizational activity. Because the counts vary by year, indicating fluctuating levels of organizational activity, I averaged the 2009 and 1995 numbers. For the few cities which are located in two counties, or incidents which occurred in two counties, I combined the two county totals for each year before summing and averaging.

APPENDIX 3: EVIDENCE, CHAPTER 4

For the interviews, I located relevant individuals by beginning with a list of about a dozen projects whose members had participated in a conference on the marking of old racial violence, and used snowball sampling methods to locate additional projects and participants. My interviews on each project also included a question asking for names of other key participants. I also located some participants by reading newspaper articles or finding websites about some of the projects. Interviews varied widely in length, ranging from less than 20 minutes to more than two hours, with a mean length of about 45 minutes. Two-thirds of the interviews were taped, while I took detailed notes on the remaining third but did not tape them.

The vast majority of interviews were with commemorative activists around particular incident-focused projects; this set of interviews also included eight individuals who had not themselves been commemorative activists but were knowledgeable about particular cases and their marking. I supplemented this set of 73 interviews with an additional 17 interviews: five with members of the organization Southern Truth and Reconciliation (an umbrella group interested in several cases in Georgia), five with individuals involved in projects addressing post-1954 violence, four addressing cases of non-commemoration, one with the curator with the “Without Sanctuary” exhibit of lynching photographs, and two with authors of books that may have helped spur resurgent interest in early 20th Century buried racial violence.

Among the interviewees comprising the main set, 38 mnemonic activists were white and 24 were African American, while two were of another race and all eight of the secondary sources interviewed about specific projects (3 authors of books about

particular incidents, two writers of newspaper articles, two graduate students, and one city council member) were white. Twenty-five interviewees were female, while 47 were male. Though African Americans made up less than half of all interviewees, this may reflect the fact that nearly half of the projects were around past expulsions of African Americans, including some expulsions so “successful” that they had yielded nearly all-white towns to this day (making African American involvement difficult), while many of the projects in other sites featured interracial leadership.

To gain insight into Springfield’s 1908 Race Riot Commemoration, I visited the city for three and a half days of its centennial commemoration in August 2008, centered on the single day most geared toward commemoration. In addition to my six interviews with activists and one with a reporter there, I conducted very short (averaging less than 10 minutes each) semi-structured taped interviews of 32 audience members (18 white, 13 black, 1 Latino) at a commemorative exhibit and untaped interviews with six exhibit viewers and four viewers of a staged re-enactment of the 1908 trial of an accused killer from the riot. The city’s Lincoln Presidential Library provided me with copies of all comment slips that had been returned to them from viewers of their exhibit over the preceding two months—a total of 84 comment slips. I also attended numerous commemoration activities, including the trial re-enactment and a daylong program at the Lincoln Presidential Library that drew about 150 attendees, observed and took pages of notes on the exhibit at the Lincoln Presidential Library and another exhibit at the State Library, took photographs of memorial markers around town, and visited a final separate exhibit at the city’s art museum. The Lincoln Library provided me with a tabulation of evaluation forms filled out by 79 participants in their daylong program, as well as

photocopies of evaluations filled out by the two summer programs' students. I used the Springfield newspaper's archives to identify the twenty most-commented-on stories run about the riot and collect all online reader comments posed about the stories. I returned to Springfield in February 2009, during its observation of the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, to observe the extent to which race riot commemoration persisted in the presence of commemorating Lincoln.

For Wilmington's commemorative activities, I traveled twice to the city and attended the dedication of a public park and a commemorative ceremony devoted to marking the riot. I also visited UNC-Wilmington's archives, which contain the entire public records of the 1898 Foundation, one of the two efforts designed to address the incident and its legacy, and read hundreds of pages of these documents, including a document detailing the history of the commemorative effort. Five interviews from the set of 72 described earlier were with activists in the Wilmington case. I obtained a copy of the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report, which was produced by a government commission charged with investigating the history and impacts of the incident and was issued to great public fanfare in 2006. I read several dozen newspaper articles chronicling the trajectory of the project, along with a book produced by the projects' activists telling the story of how the incident resurged in public memory.

For the Moore's Ford case, I conducted in-person or over-the-phone interviews with seven activists in that case. I traveled to Monroe, Georgia on two occasions, attending the 2009 re-enactment and a meeting of the Memorial Committee primarily dedicated to the group's scholarship program. In addition to reading national news stories about the commemoration and the FBI investigation, I obtained several dozen

local news stories about the project and a document produced by the group dedicated to explaining to those contemplating similar projects how the group had attained some success.

I also traveled to several other sites of memory movement efforts. In 2007, I attended a two-day gathering dedicated to seeking remembrance, redress, and/or prosecutions in several dozen incidents of past racial violence across the country, held at the University of Mississippi. I audiotaped and took detailed notes on this conference. In Atlanta, I participated in a “1906 Race Riot Walk,” a tour of key sites in its 1906 riot conducted monthly in the years following 2006 by one of the participants in the 2006 commemorative effort. I visited the cultural center in Mims, Florida that honors the life and legacy of Harry T. Moore and Harriette Moore, NAACP activists killed in a 1951 Klan attack. I also visited the Orlando gravesite of July Perry, killed in Ocoee, Florida’s 1920 race riot, which was found and marked by commemorative activists during the 1990s, as well as the site of a temporary marker erected in Valdosta, Georgia around the 1918 murder of Mary Turner and a dozen other African Americans. I attended a 2010 meeting in Newnan, Georgia of a group planning a second effort to mark the 1899 lynching of an African American in that location after the first effort had met with widespread local derision, primarily because the victim was seen as guilty of the killing for which he was lynched. I also attended a forum held in 2010 in Atlanta that brought together members of 30 families affected by “cold case” racially motivated murders who were interested in continuing to push for FBI investigations. Finally, I attended a 2010 conference held by Tulsa’s John Hope Franklin Center on racial violence and reconciliation.

I also read hundreds of newspaper articles concerning the commemorative projects in order to better understand their unfolding and trajectories, as well as to gauge media presentation of particular projects. I read several books on Tulsa's massacre (which included coverage of its commemorative resurgence), another book on Rosewood and its resurgence, and dozens of book chapters and journal articles on other incidents and the projects they have recently seen. I watched four movies concerning the incidents, and read parts of commission reports issued during the 1990s and 2000s around the Rosewood and Tulsa cases.

APPENDIX 4: MEASURING COMMEMORATION, CHAPTER 4

Table 4.1 presents an index score summarizing the extent of commemoration attained by each project, along with brief summaries of several of the components, the extent of national newspaper coverage of each project, and the year of initiation for each project. I explain each column in turn.

The first column is the sum of several measures of enacted commemoration, with a maximum possible score of 25. There were three broad categories of commemoration considered in this index: high-impact civil action, government action, and low-impact civil action. In the category of high-impact civil action, I assigned each project a score of zero or one on each of these outcomes: sustained activity around marking the incident over a number of years, the formation of a formal group around commemoration or redress, enactment of a commemoration ceremony or march, the creation of a permanent memorial, the creation of a website devoted to marking the incident, and the creation of scholarships recognizing the incident. In some cases, incidents were scored 0.5. For example, incidents in which the only permanent memorial created was a small gravestone (rather than a public memorial, statue, etc.), marked as “minor” in the “physical commemoration” column of Table 4.1, were scored 0.5 on that outcome. In the category of government action, I assigned scores similarly, with regard to: the provision of government funding for commemoration, the creation of a government-sponsored commission to investigate the incident being marked, the issuing of an apology or pardon by a government official around the incident, and other government action. In the final category of low-impact civil action, I evaluated whether an incident had: sparked a demand for government action, led to a movie or documentary about the incident,

sparked a play or other arts-based commemoration, been the main topic of a college or university course, or anything else. Information on all these outcomes was drawn from the interviews and newspaper research, and the selection of outcomes to measure was principally driven by classifying all of the outcomes interviewees mentioned in open-ended questioning about what kinds of commemoration had occurred. The final step in the creation of the index was to double the scores assigned to the high-impact and government action categories, to designate their greater weight than low-impact civil action. The resulting maximum score was 25.

An index is appropriate here for several reasons. First, the primary purpose of the index in this paper is descriptive, showing that a range of outcomes exist. In the analyses, the outcome is dichotomized, rendering small or moderate differences potentially due to choices about weighting each factor largely irrelevant. The high degree of overlap among different aspects of the index (columns 3 through 5), and the correlation between the index scores and newspaper coverage scores, augment confidence in the index. Finally, using a series of separate dichotomous outcomes (such as whether a statue was built, whether a monument was built, etc.) rather than an index would have first, greatly complicated the outcome, and second, over-emphasized small distinctions between outcomes (for example, in some cases, a statue may never have been built *because* a monument was built instead).

The news stories score sums the number of stories mainly about each incident in nine major media outlets between 1980 and mid-2009, collected using Lexis-Nexis and several supplemental databases. Scores of 0.5 were assigned to incidents for stories that

were about several incidents; for example, several stories about the documentary *Banished* covered multiple incidents rather than being focused on a single one.

APPENDIX 5: MNEMONIC HOOKS AND MOVEMENT-INTERNAL FACTORS, CHAPTER 4

Mnemonic hooks

By definition, structures are usually stable, but scholars of movements (e.g. Meyer and Minkoff 2006) have noted that destabilizing external events sometimes occur to provide openings in seemingly inhospitable opportunity structures. Similarly, Tarrow (1996) distinguishes between permanent and stable features of political opportunity structures, to point out that shifting alignments can provide opportunities for movements even when overall opportunity structures appear hostile. In fact, such was the case with the three major commemorations that have taken place around events facing less conducive conditions.

In Rosewood, Florida, the movement for compensation and commemoration was spurred by the 1982 rediscovery of the incident by journalist Gary Moore; the story entered the national news in 1983 and this broader national mnemonic resurrection of the incident was crucial in the success of the compensation and commemoration project (D'Orso 1996). The story was particularly effective because Rosewood was the first such expulsion known to enter the awareness of most white Americans. The apparent historic import of Rosewood was therefore magnified by its position as first in line for attention in a political environment newly open to hearing stories of anti-black violence, just as Stonewall, the “founding myth” of gay liberation, gained historic purchase over another, more successful clash with police by being marked first (Armstrong and Cragg 2006). Equally significant, since Rosewood had been destroyed, activists pursued redress

through the state of Florida—an entity with significantly more commemorative capacity than any city or county-level government.

In the Moore's Ford lynching case, while African Americans had tried to rekindle memories of the event and pursue prosecutions four times over nearly half a century, only when Clinton Adams turned himself into the FBI to tell his story of witnessing the murders as a boy did a sustained effort catch on. The Adams story was national news, especially as it occurred in the context of resurgent interest in investigating civil-rights era cold case murders; the white Georgian who played the largest role in building the Moore's Ford Memorial Committee became aware of the incident from the Adams story (Rusk interviews). Ongoing FBI and GBI consideration of prosecutions has continued to shape the form taken by commemorative efforts, as the post-2005 re-enactments of the lynching have developed in part as an effort to push forward prosecution (Dixon & Mundie interview).

The Waco case was similarly pushed forward by the mnemonic hook offered by the publication of a book about its 1915 lynching in 2003. Author Patricia Bernstein was invited to Waco to speak at the only church in town that had condemned the lynching at the time it occurred; this speaking engagement led to the involvement of the city's Community Race Relations Coalition in commemoration efforts. Though some efforts to mark the killing had taken place earlier, it was the involvement of the CCRC that generated enough momentum to push the city and county's leaders to issue statements of regret about the lynching. However, while it is clear that the Waco case was pushed forward by the hook that Bernstein's book and speaking engagement provided, it is less clear why similar events—such as the publication of books about other cases—did not

push these cases forward. Future research on mnemonic hooks should consider why these hooks are more effective in some cases than others. Alternatively, of course, success in the Waco case may be primarily explained by the unusually horrific nature of the killing (and the intense desire for repudiation it was therefore able to spawn in the 1990s and 2000s), or by movement-internal factors.

Movement-internal factors

While movement-internal factors appear significantly less important than external factors in explaining movement success, they do play some role. Detailed consideration of movement-internal factors is a topic for future research. I draw on findings from this study to offer some brief suggestions for the most important movement-internal factors that might be considered.

First, with the exception of Rosewood (where the town no longer existed, but descendants of victims were brought on board from around the state), more successful commemorative movements relied on support from local residents rather than being driven by “outsiders.” The cases in which those from outside a city attempted to commemorate an incident within a city fared relatively poorly. In Price, Utah, commemoration was driven largely by those from Salt Lake City, two hours away. In fact, the majority of those present at the commemorative ceremony for the Robert Marshall lynching were from out of town. The sense that outsiders had little understanding or appreciation for local history served as fuel for criticisms of the effort, much as criticism of lynching by Northerners was rejected by some Southerners in the

early 20th century on the grounds that it was meddling by outsiders. The criticism was so severe that FBI sharpshooters were stationed at buildings around the commemorative ceremony to deal with death threats toward the organizers. Similar, albeit less severe, rejections of outsider intervention were apparent in three less successful projects in Georgia.

Conversely, projects that were endorsed or led by “insiders” had stronger claims to legitimacy. While some of these insiders included well-established local activists and descendants of victims, they also on occasion included descendants of perpetrators. While the prior chapter found that proximity to a prior movement helped generate new commemorative projects in nearby locations, the finding of the importance of insider involvement suggests drawbacks to strategies that rely on support from neighbors. While proximity may help fuel new project creation, this dynamic can carry costs in terms of local resistance if too much of the load is carried by outsiders.

A second internal factor impacting the trajectories of commemorative movements concerns the choices activists make in framing their goals (Snow et al. 1986) and the strategies they employ. While the mnemonic resurgence of the Rosewood massacre yielded compensation to survivors, no other incident has seen similar results, and in fact, demands for reparations or compensation (in cases including Tulsa, OK, Forsyth County, GA, and Springfield, MO) have sparked such resistance that many projects explicitly excluded consideration of such demands from their agendas. This was the case in both Wilmington and Atlanta, where activists saw such demands as futile and likely to limit success in other domains. As Meyer (2006) argues, more muted movements aroused less opposition and brought broader constituencies on board, though they also restricted

themselves from success in certain domains. In Wilmington, project founders devoted careful attention to a statement of purpose declaring that nobody alive today is responsible for what happened in 1898. Though the state study commission investigated the economic impacts of the coup on African Americans, the 1898 Foundation's economic proposals were modest and involved voluntary partnerships to build patronage of black businesses. In Georgia, Moore's Ford activists, mindful that prosecution efforts had failed four times previously, focused on the universally unobjectionable goal of honoring the victims of the lynching first before moving to other approaches, in order to build broad community support for addressing racial division. Since 2005, the launching of annual lynching re-enactment ceremonies by Georgia's Association of Black Elected Officials (GABEO) has split the Moore's Ford Memorial Committee constituency, and the effects of these re-enactments remain unclear. Whether the more confrontational and divisive approach typified by the re-enactments will pay off in progress toward prosecution of two living men that GABEO leaders believe to be guilty remains to be seen, but what is clear is that this approach to rekindling memory carries different benefits, costs, and collateral consequences than a more muted and consensual approach.

A third factor that may be under movements' control concerns processes of alliance-building. Perhaps most obviously, some evidence from this study suggested that projects that involved more commemorators in planning were more successful. More successful efforts in sites like Wilmington, Atlanta, and Springfield brought together dozens of organizations with hundreds of people involved in commemorative activities. Of course, institutionalization of commemoration was more likely when supporters or allies in government could be brought on board as well. Some activists also credited

gaining support from local journalists as a key part of building support. For example, in Waco, Texas, efforts to generate an apology were greatly aided by the local and Houston papers' editorializing in support. Future research might investigate whether particular strategies in building alliances yield different results.

A final movement-influenced factor of interest involves the racial composition of leadership and participants in mnemonic projects. Several projects—most notably Wilmington and Atlanta—used a structure in which one black and one white co-chair led each committee. More generally, there was a wide range of diversity in the racial composition of the projects, with some, such as East St. Louis' efforts, led entirely by African Americans, and others, notably those in counties that had had successful expulsions, dominated by whites. In the Wilmington and Atlanta cases, commemorators credited this biracial structure with maintaining a broad appeal and successfully reaching out to multiple constituencies. While this is likely true, the historical strength of race as a dividing line in American society suggests that biracial projects may face some challenges that uniracial projects need not contend with. In the Moore's Ford group, African Americans appeared to have a greater emotional investment in the goal of prosecution than whites. The changing nature of the Moore's Ford activities opened up a fault that was not solely along racial lines, but did see more African Americans favoring the re-enactments as a means to advance prosecution and whites favoring more reserved forms of commemoration in service to goals of racial reconciliation. Whether the potential for interracial groups to see this kind of division is unique to groups that address events recent enough that prosecution is still possible, or whether interracial alliances contain these sorts of potential conflicts more broadly, is a topic for future work.